Outlining the Essay

Student Name:

Instructor:

Date:

Course

# About This DLA

## Important Note

All the activities (4) in the DLA must be completed in their entirety before receiving credit for completion. Students are welcome to meet with a tutor if they need help, but please be aware that students might need a second appointment for review and signature in that case. If your instructor wants evidence of this completed DLA, return this form to him or her with the tutor’s signature included.

## Learning Outcome

Through computer activities and other independent work, this activity will help you organize your essay in the form of an outline.

## Activities (approximately 1 hour)

Read the information, complete the activities that follow, and be prepared to discuss your answers when you meet with a tutor.

# Understanding the Outline

Writers may choose to outline in one or two places during the writing process: (1) before writing the essay—to help organize their thoughts and (2) after writing the essay—to make sure everything written relates back to the main point known as the thesis.

Writers may choose to use an informal or formal outline pattern. Informal outlines contain words and phrases about the topic and subtopics in the essay and work best when time is limited, for example, in a timed writing setting. Formal outlines generally contain whole and complete sentences and are many times required by professors.

## Informal Outline

Thesis (What is your topic, and why is it important?)

Support for the Thesis

The Details

Support for the Thesis

The Details

Support for the Thesis

The Details

Conclusion

## Formal Outline

1. Thesis: Write your thesis in a complete sentence.
2. Topic Sentence One (Support for the Thesis)
   1. Details
   2. Details
   3. Details
3. Topic Sentence Two (Support for the Thesis)
   1. Details
   2. Details
   3. Details
4. Topic Sentence Three (Support for the Thesis
   1. Details
   2. Details
   3. Details
5. Conclusion

# Activities

Check off each box once you have completed the activity.

## 1. Review an Outline

Read the following article.

**Weight Lifting 101**

I’d heard rumors about it before I ever left for college, and once I moved into the dorm, I realized it was not just a rumor. I needed a way to combat the “Freshman Fifteen,” that dreaded poundage resulting from a combination of late-night pizzas, care-package cookies, and cafeteria cheesecakes. So, my roommate and I headed to the university gym where the weight-training rooms are filled with student “chain gangs” sweating and clanging their way through a series of mechanical monsters. As I looked around, it became obvious that people work out for quite different reasons. Health enthusiasts, toning or defining devotees, athletes, and body builders seem to be the main categories of those lifting weights.

Some students lift weights as part of an exercise program aimed at maintaining or improving health. They’ve heard about strong abdominals reducing lower-back problems. They’ve learned that improved flexibility can help to reduce tension buildup and prevent the headaches and other problems related to prolonged periods of sitting or studying. They know that combining weights with aerobic exercise is an efficient way to lose weight. A person can eat the same amount of food and still lose weight, since increased muscle mass burns more calories. Typical weight-lifting routines for students eager to stay healthy amid the strain of college life are around 20 minutes a day, three times a week.

The ”toners” hope to produce smoothly defined muscles. Not surprisingly, this category includes many young women. Lifting weights can target problem spots and help shape up the body. To develop solid arms, these people use dumbbells and a bench press. Other equipment focuses on achieving toned legs, abdominals, and buttocks. Toning workouts must be done more often than three times a week. I talked to a few young women who lift weights (after aerobic activity of some kind) for about 30 minutes, five times a week.

Athletes must lift weights. Volleyball, rowing, basketball, football – all of these sports require weight training. It may seem obvious that a football player needs to be muscular and strong, but how do other athletes benefit from weight lifting? Muscles are a lot like brains; the more they are used, the more they can do. Strong muscles can increase a person’s speed, flexibility, endurance, and coordination. Consider the competition required in various sports; different muscle groups matter more to different athletes. Runners, especially sprinters, need bulging thighs for incredible speed. Basketball players need powerful arms and shoulders for endless shots and passes. Gymnasts need all-over muscle development for demanding balance and coordination. Football brings all these areas into play in a contest that requires great strength, speed, and agility. Weight lifting is a vital part of athletes’ intensive training programs.

One last group can’t be ignored. Some people lift weights to become as big and as strong as possible. I worked out with a guy who is about six foot two and weighs more than 200 pounds. He bench-presses more than I weight. In a room devoted to dumbbells and barbells (also known as free weights), body builders moan as they struggle to lift super-heavy bars. After only a short time in this grunt room, it’s clear the goal is not simply to be health, toned, or strong. These lifters want their strength to show. They want their muscles to bulge. Many participants do little if any aerobic activity. They spend most of their time lifting very heavy weights that build bulk and strength. My partner works out for an hour or more, five days a week.

Not everyone fits neatly into these four categories. Personally, I work out to be health and toned, and find that I can benefit from lifting only three times a week. Weight lifting has become more and more popular among college students who appreciate exercise as a great stress reliever. And for me, the gym proved to be the best place to combat that dreaded “freshman fifteen.”

Reread the essay to find the thesis and topic sentences.

Now compare your understanding of the reading with the sample outlines below.

# Weight Lifting 101—Informal Outline

Thesis: Health enthusiasts, toning or defining devotees, athletes, and body builders seem to be the main categories of those lifting weights.

Health enthusiasts

• reduce lower back pain

• reduce tension

• prevent headaches

• lose weight

• frequency: 20 minutes a day, three times a week

Toning devotees

• mostly women

• shape up arms, legs, abdominals, buttocks

• frequency: 30 min

Athletes

• increase speed, endurance, and coordination

• different sports require developing different muscle groups

• runners—thighs—speed

• basketball players—arms and shoulders—shots and passes

• gymnasts—all over—balance and coordination

• football—all over—strength, speed, and agility

Body Builders

• example—my friend

• lift weights no aerobic

• goal strength and bulk

• frequency: an hour or more, 5 days a week

Conclusion: Not everyone fits neatly into these four categories.

# Weight Lifting 101—Formal Outline

Thesis: Health enthusiasts, toning or defining devotees, athletes, and body builders seem to be the main categories of those lifting weights.

I. Some students lift weights as part of an exercise program aimed at maintaining or improving health.

1. Health benefits

1. Reduced lower-back problems

2. Reduced tension

3. Headache prevention

4. Weight loss

1. Frequency

1. 20 minutes

2. Three times a week

II. The "toners" hope to produce smoothly defined muscles.

1. Young women
2. Goal—shape up the body

1. Solid arms—dumbbell and benchpress

2. Toned legs, abdominals, and buttocks

1. Frequency

1. 30 minutes

2. Five times a week

III. Athletes must lift weights.

1. Weight Training required

1. Volleyball

2. Rowing

3. Basketball

4. Football

1. Developed muscles can do more
2. Different athletes, different muscles, different goals

1. Runners—thighs—speed

2. Basketball players—arms and shoulders—shots and passes

3. Gymnasts—all over—balance and coordination

4. Football players—all over—strength, speed, agility

IV. Some people lift weights to become as big and as strong as possible.

1. Example—my friend

1. Weighs 200 pounds

2. Bench-presses more than I weigh

1. The grunt room

1. Dumbells

2. Barbells

3. Super heavy bars

1. No aerobic activity
2. Frequency

1. Hour or more

2. Five days a week

Conclusion: Not everyone fits neatly into these four categories.

## 2. Write an Outline

Now it’s your turn. Prewrite, then make an outline for an essay you are working on in a class **or** one of the following topics below. You may choose to craft an informal or formal outline. Order your support (topic sentences and details) according to space, time, or importance.

1. A place you like to visit
2. Lessons you have learned on the job or at school
3. Stresses in your life
4. A course that is easy/hard/interesting

Remember, you do not have to write the essay itself—just the plan for it.

## 3. Review the DLA

Go to https://mtsac2.mywconline.com and use the [Mt. SAC Writing Center Appointment System](https://mtsac2.mywconline.com/) to make a DLA appointment, or sign-up to see a tutor on the “**Walk-in**” list in the Writing Center. During your session with a tutor, explain your understanding of outlining the essay. Consider the main concept you learned in this DLA. Explain to the tutor the benefits and challenges of crafting informal and formal outlines.

Student’s Signature:

Tutor’s Signature

Date:

Date:

If you are an individual with a disability and need a greater level of accessibility for any document in The Writing Center or on The Writing Center’s website, please contact the Mt. SAC Accessible Resource Centers for Students, [access@mtsac.edu](mailto:access@mtsac.edu), (909) 274-4290.

Revised 04/12/2022