Creating an Outline for a Persuasive Paper

You've done all your research and found a ton of information on your topic. Before you start writing your paper, take time to create an outline. This will help you organize your information and make the writing process smoother.

We use Roman numerals for an outline. Each Roman numeral stands for a paragraph:

    I.   Introduction

    II.   First subtopic

    III.   Second subtopic

    IV.   Third subtopic

    V.   Conclusion

This is a good start, but it's even better if we can have a better idea of what will be in each paragraph.

You must give factual information and arguments to support your thesis. You should also have either an anecdote or emotional arguments (or both). Your factual information and arguments are the most important part of your paper, but an anecdote can grab your reader's attention. I often recommend starting your paper with an anecdote, then giving your factual arguments followed (in a separate paragraph) by emotional arguments:

    I.   Introduction

        A. anecdote

        B. topic sentence: animal testing should be stopped

    II.   Factual arguments

        A. many companies don't use animal testing

        B. uses of computer models

        C. human trials

    III.   Emotional argument: testing is cruel

        A. animals deaths (include pie chart)

        B. quotes from other animal lovers

    IV.   Conclusion

        A. Actions the reader can take to help eliminate animal testing

[continued]

Your outline may be longer or shorter than this; that's fine. This is just an example. Notice I don't need full sentences here. I just need notes to tell myself what information to put in what place. Notice also I've indicated where my visual aid is going. Because I'm hoping that reading my paper will convince my reader to agree with me, I'm giving actions the reader can take in the final paragraph. (Depending on your topic, this may not apply to your paper.)

Your turn! Take the information you've gathered from your research and put it into an outline.

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