# Creating an Outline for a Research 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 better if we can have a stronger idea of what will be in each paragraph.  For the parts of each paragraph, such as support and examples, we use capital letters.  Here's an example outline for a report on Kenya:

    I.   Introduction
       A.   Most interesting fact I found on Kenya
       B.   Topic sentence
   II.   Geography of Kenya
       A.   Land features
       B.   Water features
       C.   Major cities
  III.   Natural Environment
       A.   Flora
       B.   Fauna
  IV.   Cultures of Kenya
       A.   Religions (include pie chart)
       B.   Languages (include pie chart)
   V.   Literature and the arts
       A.   Literature and major authors
       B.   Current artists
  VI.   Conclusion

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 aids are going.  (You may or may not be required to have a visual aid.)

In my introduction, I start with the most interesting fact I found.  This is a way of drawing the reader into my paper.

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

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