

Organizing your note cards...

After you have followed every lead from your working bibliography and have taken adequate notes, you are ready to begin the final phase of your working outline. To do this you will need to organize your notes. Follow these steps to begin getting your thoughts in order.

- 1) Put all cards with the same title in the same stack. For example, all cards with the heading "Amount of violence on TV" should be placed in one stack. You should have as many stacks as you have subclaims or points on your working outline.
- 2) Read each stack of cards and arrange them in logical order. You may discover you noted some information that is redundant or irrelevant or a section that has too little information. Do more research, combine the content with another related stack or section, or omit the irrelevant or weak information (throw out the card).
- 3) Now, subdivide the note cards in each stack to form subtopics. For example, "Amount of violence on TV" notes may be divided into 2 sub-categories: "children's programs" and "adult programs." Place subtopics in logical order and number each note card accordingly.
 - a. **How do I know what the subtopics are?** Read the information on each card. Determine patterns or similarities. Group accordingly and make up a new name for the grouping.
 - b. **What if I don't have subtopics within a stack?** Some stacks may contain subtopics, and some may not. Think about how you will construct your argument (how you will use the evidence). Place the notes in an order that makes sense to you.

Writing the expanded outline...

Using your note cards, begin writing the expanded outline. The major divisions of your working outline will become major headings in the expanded outline. The subtopics you identified within each stack of cards will become the subheadings in the expanded outline. Follow these steps in developing the expanded outline.

1. Begin with the proper heading on the top left.
2. Create a working title for your essay and use it as the **title of the outline**.
3. Write the **thesis statement** under the title.
4. You do not need to outline the introduction or conclusion.
5. Paraphrase your evidence (no need to rewrite it all).
6. Use major divisions from the notes as the major divisions in the outline.
7. **Indent subtopics** one-half inch (or tab once) so all letters or numbers of the same kind line up directly under one another.
8. Use **a minimum of two parts** when it is necessary to subdivide. For example, an **A** subtopic must be followed by a **B** subtopic, and a **1** subtopic must be followed by a **2** subtopic.
9. **Double space** the entire outline.

The following outline illustrates a detailed scheme, consistent in its use of complete sentences.

Doe 1

Jane Doe

Mr. Waters

English 101

May 21, 2006

Cell Phone Ban: Lifesaver or Overkill?

THESIS: Rather than restricting cell phone use in moving vehicles, the state must educate the public about phoning and driving dangers and prosecute irresponsible users under negligent and reckless driving laws.

I. Introduction

II. First, the public must recognize that there is still no empirical proof of a direct link between cell phone use and traffic accidents.

A. Most studies that attempt to demonstrate a correlation are inconclusive.

1. Redelmeir and Tibshirani study (note 1)
2. Cain and Burris survey (note 2)

B. Evidence often used to “prove” connection is skewed.

1. Most states do not keep records on accidents caused by driver distractions (note 3)
2. Under-reporting leads to skewed data (note 4)

III. While studies linking cell phones to accidents remain inconclusive, individuals must weigh the potential risks of using cell phones against the benefits.

A. When compared with other driving risks, risks of phoning are small.

1. Harvard Center for Risk Analysis finding (note 5)
2. Other distracted driving causes (note 6)

B. The benefits of being able to utilize a phone outweigh the costs.

1. Safety concerns: calling for roadside assistance (note 7)
2. Personal benefits: family communication (note 8)

IV. Proponents of cell phone bans claim that safety is the bottom line.

A. Concession: Who doesn't want safe roads? We all do.

1. Teen accident statistic in Georgia, 2014 (note 9)
2. Parent of teen cites concern (note 10)

B. Refutation: Implementing a complete ban on phones is impractical and unnecessary.

1. Rather than banning all cell phones from moving vehicles, we must educate drivers on using cell phones responsibly and enforce laws on negligent and reckless driving. (note 11)
2. Parent who acknowledges responsibility for educating child (note 12)
3. Example laws that promote safe driving (note 13)

V. Conclusion