

How to Create a Thesis Paper Outline

- I. **Introduction:** *In this section, give the reader an idea of why your paper will be important and/or interesting, what your thesis is, and what supporting arguments you will make to defend your thesis.*
 - a. Context: *Explain why this topic is important or interesting. Make the reader want to know more.*
 - b. Thesis statement: *A basic statement of your position; your answer to your research question*
 - c. Expanded thesis statement: *A brief listing of the major points that you will make in your paper, in the order in which you will make them*

- II. **Arguments:** *Each of your main arguments can either argue a point that supports your position, or argue against something you believe is wrong. Each argument should be supported by evidence from multiple sources.*
 - a. Argument 1
 - i. Supporting evidence (author, pg. or para. #)
 - ii. More supporting evidence! (author, pg. or para. #)
 - iii. Even more supporting evidence!! (author, pg. or para. #)
 - b. Argument 2
 - i. Supporting evidence (author, pg. or para. #)
 - ii. More supporting evidence! (author, pg. or para. #)
 - iii. Even more supporting evidence!! (author, pg. or para. #)
 - c. Argument 3
 - i. Supporting evidence (author, pg. or para. #)
 - ii. More supporting evidence! (author, pg. or para. #)
 - iii. Even more supporting evidence!! (author, pg. or para. #)

- III. **Conclusion:** *This section of your paper should summarize and look to the future.*
 - a. Acknowledge the opposing side of the argument
 - b. Re-emphasize your own argument by summarizing the main points that you made
 - c. Draw final conclusions about the strength of your position

Fictional Outline for a Thesis with Parenthetical Citation in MLA Format

- I. Introduction
 - a. Background
 - i. The number of flavors of ice cream produced by major companies has quadrupled over the past decade (“Consumer Choice” 25).
 - ii. People debate which flavor is the best.
 - b. Thesis: High-quality vanilla ice cream remains the best ice cream flavor on the market.
 - c. Expanded thesis: People will continue to enjoy vanilla ice cream more than any other flavor for its simplicity, versatility, and its cultural significance.

- II. Arguments
 - a. Vanilla ice cream is the best because it is simple, yet never boring.
 - i. Vanilla ice cream can be made with only four ingredients (Breyers 6).
 - ii. In her new book Rachel Ray argues, “The flavor of vanilla is a simple, yet classic one that goes well with any meal!!!” (43).
 - iii. Despite the simplicity of vanilla ice cream, it comes in many different varieties, such as French Vanilla, Vanilla Bean, and other delicious variations (“Edy’s Ice Cream” par. 6).
 - b. Vanilla ice cream is better than any other flavor because it is versatile.
 - i. Vanilla can be eaten plain, but also goes well with many different toppings.
 - ii. Vanilla is the most popular base flavor for Blizzards at Dairy Queen (McBurty 56).
 - iii. Vanilla is easily made into a milkshake as well as eaten plain, which is not the case with a flavor like cookie dough (dangerous when sucked through a straw!) (McKay 73).
 - c. Vanilla ice cream has significance in American culture.
 - i. Chef Julia Child has written, “Vanilla ice cream is one food that bridges generations. I share it with my children and grandchildren each summer” (16).
 - ii. Classic American movies like *Back to the Future* and *Anne of Green Gables* have prominently featured vanilla ice cream (“Ice Cream in the Movies” par. 8).
 - iii. American presidents have served vanilla ice cream at the White House for over 200 years (Clinton 8).
 - iv. One survey found that more Americans prefer vanilla ice cream than any other flavor (“Gallup Poll” par. 3).

- III. Conclusion
 - a. Although chocolate is a close second, vanilla reigns supreme.
 - b. Nothing can beat vanilla ice cream’s simplicity, versatility, and cultural significance.
 - c. In the future, others will attempt to beat it.
 - d. Try as they might, no manufacturer can come up with a way to top classic vanilla.