

How to Write a Harvard Outline

The classic outline form is known as the Harvard outline. Below is an example:

- History of the Vietnam War
- I. Vietnam as part of French Indochina
 - A. 19th Century imperialism
 - 1. Berlin conference, 1890
 - a. Africa
 - b. Chinese concessions
 - c. Southeast Asia
 - 2. Restored French national pride after German defeat
 - 3. Built up the French business classes after Napoleon III
 - B. Tin and rubber industries
 - C. Revolutionary insurgencies emerge after 1900
 - D. Ho Chi Minh and other French-educated Marxists
 - II. Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh Coalition
 - A. <sub idea here>
 - B. <sub idea here>
 - III. World War II and Japanese Occupation
 - IV. Vietnamese Declaration of Independence

Rules for Constructing a Harvard Outline

- Use phrases, not complete sentences
- Where you have a I, you have to have a II; where you have an A, you have to have a B
- You don't need sub ideas (sub details)

- Title (Subject)
- I. Main Idea (Main Topic) [Paragraph 1]
 - A. Sub Idea (Sub Topic)
 - B. Sub Idea (Sub Topic)
 - 1. Sub Idea of this sub idea B (Details)
 - a. Sub Idea of sub idea i (Sub Details)
 - b. Sub Idea of sub idea ii (Sub Details)
 - c. Sub Idea of sub idea iii (Sub Details)
 - 2. Sub Idea of sub idea B (Details)
 - II. Main Idea (Main Topic) [Paragraph 2]

III. Main Idea (Main Topic) [Paragraph 3]

Directions: Read the prompt and prepare an outline for a 5 paragraph essay.

Prompt: In today's world many people feel that education has reached an all time low. The older generation feels that students today just don't know many of the historical facts that they should. As part of today's generation, do you agree or disagree with these statements? Persuade your teacher of your point of view.