

## Outlining Thesis and Main Points

Your **thesis** statement tells what your essay will be about.

Now you will write notes about the main **point** and **supporting details** that will make up the body of your essay.

The main **point** supports your thesis.

The **supporting details** explain each main **point**.

You should have two or three main ideas per essay and at least two supporting details per main idea.

A clear and easy way to organize your ideas is to make notes in outline form. Your outline should show your thesis and the main idea and supporting details for each paragraph.

Here is a blank outline.

Thesis : What will your essay be about? Show your understanding of the question.

Point :

Supporting details

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Point :

Supporting details

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Point

Supporting details

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Example

Topic

*In some parts of the world, the rate of divorce has increased dramatically over the past few decades.*

*Explain some possible reasons for this problem and suggest some solutions.*

Thesis : The divorce rate is a problem, but it can be solved or reduced.

Point : Breakdown of the extended family

Supporting details

1. In the past-Family help with child care
2. In the past-Family help with expense
3. Currently-people don't have this support

Point : Stress in the workplace

Supporting details

1. Less time with family
2. Feel tired and irritable
3. Family life is unhappy

Point : Ways to solve these problems

Supporting details

1. Live closer to extended family
2. Find a less demanding job
3. Change lifestyle -> happier life

## **Written Essay (Problem + Solution)**

The divorce rate is increasing in many places. I believe that the **breakdown of the extended family and the stresses of work** are the major causes of this situation. Fortunately, although these issues have led to a rise in the divorce rate, there are ways we can solve this problem.

In my opinion, **the biggest cause of divorce is the breakdown of the extended family. In the past, a family was made up of parents, grandparents, children, and other relatives like aunt and uncle. This meant that there was always somebody available to help with child care. It also meant that expenses could be shared in times of financial difficulty. These days, people/parents often don't have this kind of support from their families, and this puts more stress on their marriage.**

**Second, stress in the workplace is another cause of divorce. These days, people are often expected to work longer hours than they did in the past. This means they spend less time at home with their families. It also means that when they are at home, they are tired and probably irritable, too. All of this adds up to an unhappy family life.**

Fortunately, **there are things that can be done to solve some of these problems if people really want to.** People can decide to **live closer** to their extended family. They can invite their elderly parents to live with them or look for a job closer to their relatives' homes. People can also **look for less demanding jobs** or decide to have one parent stay at home instead of working. These things require changing **one's lifestyle** in some big ways, but they can lead to a happier marriage and family life.

There are a lot of demands in modern life that place stress on a marriage and lead to divorce. However, people can choose to make changes to their lifestyle that can result in a better, stronger marriage.

PRACTICE 1. Read each **thesis statement** and the **main points** that follow. Choose the main idea that does **NOT belong**.

1. In my opinion, laws against smoking in public places will do a lot to discourage this unpleasant and unhealthy habit, and I don't believe any further measures are needed.
  - A. Laws can do a great deal to reduce smoking.
  - B. Laws against smoking are more effective than education, taxes, or anything else.
  - C. Smoking leads to many diseases in addition to cancer.
  
2. Sending children to school at an early age has both advantages and disadvantages.
  - A. In many places there are few or no preschools available.
  - B. Children can learn a lot by being around other children.
  - C. Young children feel insecure when they are away from their parents.
  
3. The Internet is crucial to modern life, and parents and schools can do a lot to make sure children use the Internet safely.
  - A. Although the Internet is widely available, there are still people who don't use it.
  - B. Many schools have developed systems that limit the websites children can access.
  - C. Parents often limit how and when their children can use the Internet.
  
4. I agree that modern technology has made our lives better in many ways.
  - A. Cell phones have greatly improved communication in both our private and professional lives.
  - B. There have always been people who protest any technological change.
  - C. Cars are now much easier and much safer to drive.
  
5. Although many products are tested on animals for safety and efficacy, I believe this is a cruel practice as well as being completely unnecessary.
  - A. Laboratory animals suffer a great deal of pain and discomfort.
  - B. There are other ways to test products besides using animals.
  - C. Both drug and cosmetic companies test their products on animals.



While many children start preschool when they are only three or four years old, there are both advantages and disadvantages to this situation. Preschool gives children the chance to develop important skills. It also provides a safe place for children while their parents are at work. On the other hand, it takes them away from their parents at a young age. (THESIS STATEMENT).

Preschool gives children an opportunity to develop important skills. They develop social skills when they play with the other children at school. They learn to share, to negotiate disagreements, and to do things as a group to build their team working skills. They also learn skills that will prepare them for primary school. They learn about colors, numbers, and letters. They learn to sit and listen to the teacher. These things will help them later when they start their first grade and give them confidence from an early age.

Preschool also provides a safe place for children while their parents are working. At preschool, children are cared for by trained teachers who understand children and their needs. They also know how to handle emergencies. Parents can feel confident that their children are well cared for at preschool.

There are, however, some disadvantages to sending children to preschool. The biggest one is that it separates them from their parents for a large part of the day. Many children at the age of three or four are not yet ready to spend so much time away from their parents. It can cause them to feel unhappy and insecure. It is often better for young children to be cared for by relatives, if this is possible.

In conclusion, preschool can be a good experience for many children, but others aren't ready for school at an early age. Parents need to make the decision about preschool based on the personality of each individual child and the family situation.

Thesis :

Point :

Supporting details

1. ....
2. ....

Point : .....

Supporting details

- 1.
- 2.

Point : .....

Supporting details

- 1.
2. ....
3. ....

*Some people say that the best way to discourage smoking is to make smoking illegal in public places. Other people say that this is not enough and that other measures are needed.*

*Discuss both these views, and give your opinion.*

Thesis :

Point : .....

Supporting details

1. ....

2. ....

Point : .....

Supporting details

1.

2.

Point : .....

Supporting details

1.

2. ....

3. ....

Smoking is a serious public health problem, and it needs to be discouraged. Some people feel that making laws against smoking in public places is a good way to do this. Others believe that more (measures are needed to be taken)needs to be done. In my opinion, laws against smoking are an important part of discouraging this **bad habit**, but I agree that more needs to be done.

Laws against smoking in public can go a long way toward discouraging this dangerous habit. If people aren't allowed to smoke in public, that means **they can't smoke in restaurants, stores, parks, offices, banks, libraries, and other places**. It means that **whenever they are not in their own homes or their friends' homes, they can't smoke**. This makes it difficult to smoke much of the time, and it makes people think twice before they light a cigarette.

However, I don't feel that such laws are enough. They still allow people to smoke some of the time. I believe that education is also important. This could take several forms. For example, **schools could have special programs to teach students about the dangers of smoking**. In addition, there could be notices on the radio, and the **Internet that give information about the negative effects of smoking**. The more information people see about the dangers of smoking, the more they will become aware of it. Then, they will be less likely to choose to smoke, even in their own homes.

In conclusion, smoking is a serious problem, and we need to do something about it. I believe that **laws against smoking in combination with education** can do a lot to prevent people from starting or continuing this dangerous bad habit.

Thesis : **Laws against smoking are important, but more needs to be done.**

**Point** : Laws can discourage smoking

**Supporting details**

1. ....
2. Difficult to smoke much of the time

**Point** : .....

**Supporting details**

1. ....
2. Schools could have programs