A solid outline is important for effective writing. Ensure the points covered in the outline connect well. The outline must have three main sections: an INTRODUCTION, a BODY, and a CONCLUSION.

**INTRODUCTION** – A good introduction captures the reader’s interest, clearly states the focus of the paper and gives essential background information. It also presents the thesis statement, a specific assertion that is backed up by arguments which form the structure of the paper.

**BODY** - Logically present arguments, backed by research and citations which support the thesis statement.

**CONCLUSION** - Restate or reword the thesis and show how it is supported by the arguments. Broaden the focus to leave the reader thinking about the wider implications of the topic.

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**SAMPLE OUTLINE: Essay on “Obstacles to Student Success”**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

- Opening statement introduces topic
  - Catch reader’s attention with a surprising statistic, quote or anecdote
- Indicate the structure of the paper
- Thesis statement on *Obstacles to Student Success* (include the supporting arguments, e.g., peer pressure, personal wellness, and preparation)

**II. BODY** – present and interpret research that illustrates arguments supporting thesis

- Peer Pressure
  - Excessive drinking
  - Drug abuse
  - Social acceptance
- Personal Wellness
  - Lack of family support
  - Lack of social support group
  - Lack of financial support
- Preparation
  - Lack of time management
  - Lack of study skills
  - Lack of maturity

**III. CONCLUSION**

- Present thesis, reworded, as the logical conclusion of the summarized arguments:
  - Peer pressure
  - Personal wellness
  - Preparation
- Concluding statement: broaden focus to place topic in wider context.