OUTLINING

Although it is tempting to "just jump" in and start a paper, organizing information and outlining can help make the writing process a lot smoother. Organizational skills are used by writers of all sorts and can be applied to a variety of literary assignments.

BEFORE OUTLINING

The steps below are often called pre-writing exercises and can help writers develop ideas for a paper. After developing ideas for a specific paper a student can then move into outlining the paper.

- Determine the purpose of the paper
- Determine the audience of the paper
- Develop a working thesis for the paper
- Brainstorm ideas to include in the paper
- Research ideas to include in the paper

OUTLINING

After developing ideas for a paper, a writer can organize the available information into an outline. There are many different ways to put information together; however, the following guidelines work for most topics and will give a writer a very basic outline to build upon:

- Organize: Group related ideas together
- Order: Arrange material in subsections from general to specific or from abstract to concrete
- Label: Create main and sub headings