ORGANIZATION PLAN INFORMATION SHEET

ENGL 102.2

WRITING AND RESEARCH

The first thing you should notice is that this assignment and information sheet are labeled "The Organization Plan" and not "The Outline." While an Outline is a type of Organization Plan, you are not required in this course to have any sort of formal outline of the sort shown in your texts.

The idea behind an Organization Plan is to gain control over the vast amount of information that you've been collecting from your sources and on your note cards.

Now that you've been reading your sources and finding out all sorts of interesting new information about your topic, you need to determine what you really do know and think about that topic.

1) State, in a sentence or so, exactly what you think or feel about the issue at hand. Don't worry about whether you are agreeing with the majority or how you're going to prove this opinion, just state **where you are** at this time with your subject.

2) This is now your thesis. It is a working thesis, and is prone to change as you continue to read new material, but it is a start. Many people find it helpful to turn their thesis into a **question** to help focus the rest of the essay.

3) Determine what the main ideas or evidence is that has convinced you of that position. Try to pick the 3 to 5 **most significant or strongest** supporting arguments.

4) Put them in the order **that makes the most sense to you**.
    Determine at this time if you need to use a comparison/contrast or other specific organization pattern.
    Determine if you want to lead off with a strong point, or build to your strongest points.
    The actual organization doesn't matter, and may even change later when you start writing. What's most important is that you are thinking about how to organize the information effectively for YOUR argument.

5) Determine what sources you have to support each of those points. At this point you may decide that you need to do more research to support an argument or two, but you will usually have the necessary sources already.

Please note the order here.

Successful papers are organized around the *author's* ARGUMENTS, not around the sources.

The #1 cause of problems for students is when they look at their sources and create their outline around them instead of asking FIRST, "what am I trying to argue here?" and organizing around the arguments instead.

A successful organization plan/outline includes:

- A clearly stated thesis/main argument

- Multiple claims/arguments/points that work together to support the main thesis/argument

- A specific order for the supporting claims that reinforces the purpose/main thesis

- A preliminary list that identifies the sources that will be used for each supporting claim

An Example of an Organization Plan/outline for an ENGL 102 paper:

THESIS: The childhood obesity rate is rising because of the "toxic environment" that children live in today.

> Current obesity rates – the obesity epidemic
>
> > The overall obesity rate (Koplan and Dietz)
> >
> > Childhood obesity rates (NE Dept. of Health and Human Services)
> >
> > Negative Health Effects on Children (Critser)
>
> The Toxic Environment
>
> > Effect of and Amount of Advertising (Brownell)
> >
> > Fast Food (Spurlock)
> >
> > Processed Foods at Grocery Stores (Pollan)
>
> The Role of Parents
>
> > Parents lack proper nutrition knowledge (Nestle)
> >
> > Marketing influences grocery purchases (Wansink)
> >
> > Convenience influences food choices (Critser)
>
> The Role of Schools
>
> > Teaching Nutrition (Nestle)
> >
> > Better lunch options (Zelman)
> >
> > Controlling Student Access to Poor Food Choices (Center for Science in the Public Interest)
>
> Conclusion

In addition, many instructors also ask to have an early, rough Works Cited/References page for these sources.