

Organize Your Ideas

Now that you have collected information, develop an **outline** to organize your ideas. An outline shows your main ideas and the order in which you are going to write about them. It's the bare bones of what will later become a fleshed-out written report.

1. Write down all the main ideas.
2. List the subordinate ideas below the main ideas.
3. Avoid any repetition of ideas.

Below is a partial sample outline for a research paper entitled **The Early Days of Baseball**.

- I. Baseball is born
 - 1. Rounders
 - 1. Originated in England in the 1600s.
 - 2. Differences between rounders and baseball.
 - 2. The Abner Doubleday theory
 - 1. Many people think Abner Doubleday invented baseball in 1839.
 - a. Doubleday's friend, Graves, claimed he was a witness.
 - b. A commission credited Doubleday with inventing the game.
 - 2. Historians say theory is bogus.
- II. Baseball becomes popular
 - 1. Interest soars after 1900
 - 1. Kids' favorite warm-weather sport.
 - 2. Crowds follow pennant races and World Series.
 - 3. Star players become national heroes.
 - 4. Known as "the national pastime."
 - a. Quote from philosopher Jacques Barzun: "Whoever wants to know the heart and mind of America had better learn baseball."

2. The Babe Ruth era
 1. Babe Ruth joins NY Yankees, 1920
 - a. Plays outfield.
 - b. Hits more and longer home runs than anyone before.
 2. Other heroes
 - a. Lou Gehrig.
 - b. Rogers Hornsby.
 3. Radio stations begin broadcasting games
 - a. Play-by-play accounts reach millions of people.

Write a First Draft

1. Every essay or paper is made up of three parts:
 - introduction
 - body
 - conclusion
2. The introduction is the first paragraph of the paper. It often begins with a general statement about the topic and ends with a more specific statement of the main idea of your paper. The purpose of the introduction is to:
 - let the reader know what the topic is
 - inform the reader about your point of view
 - arouse the reader's curiosity so that he or she will want to read about your topic
3. The body of the paper follows the introduction. It consists of a number of paragraphs in which you develop your ideas in detail.

- Limit each paragraph to one main idea. (Don't try to talk about more than one idea per paragraph.)
 - Prove your points continually by using specific examples and quotations.
 - Use transition words to ensure a smooth flow of ideas from paragraph to paragraph.
4. The conclusion is the last paragraph of the paper. Its purpose is to:
- summarize your points, leaving out specific examples
 - restate the main idea of the paper