

## Module 4: Examining Love, Friendship, and Power

### Topic 6 Content: Creating an Outline

#### Introduction: Part One



A good persuasive piece uses a mix of opinion and fact. It contains something of interest to hook the reader, gives all the information necessary for the reader to understand the topic, and carries enough relevant information and persuasive language to persuade the reader to agree with the author's claim. Some effective persuasive pieces employ humor, some rely on emotion, and some are based almost entirely on factual information. The strategy an author chooses is based on experience, the topic, and the audience.

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### Topic 6 Content: Creating an Outline

#### Introduction: Part Two



For your persuasive research paper, you will learn how to create a general outline to help you format and plan your essay so that you thoroughly address your chosen topic and convincingly express your opinion. When you have finished your rough outline, it will resemble a list of words or phrases that briefly summarize in sequential order the major points that you will make as you compose your first draft. You can think of your rough outline as a road map to which you can refer during the drafting stage. You do not have to worry about correct grammar or punctuation as you develop your rough outline. In fact, you do not have to use complete sentences at all because outlining is simply part of the planning stage. Your objective is to focus on the essence of your paper: the meaning behind the points you want to make and the order in which you want to present them to your reader.

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**Introduction: Part Three**

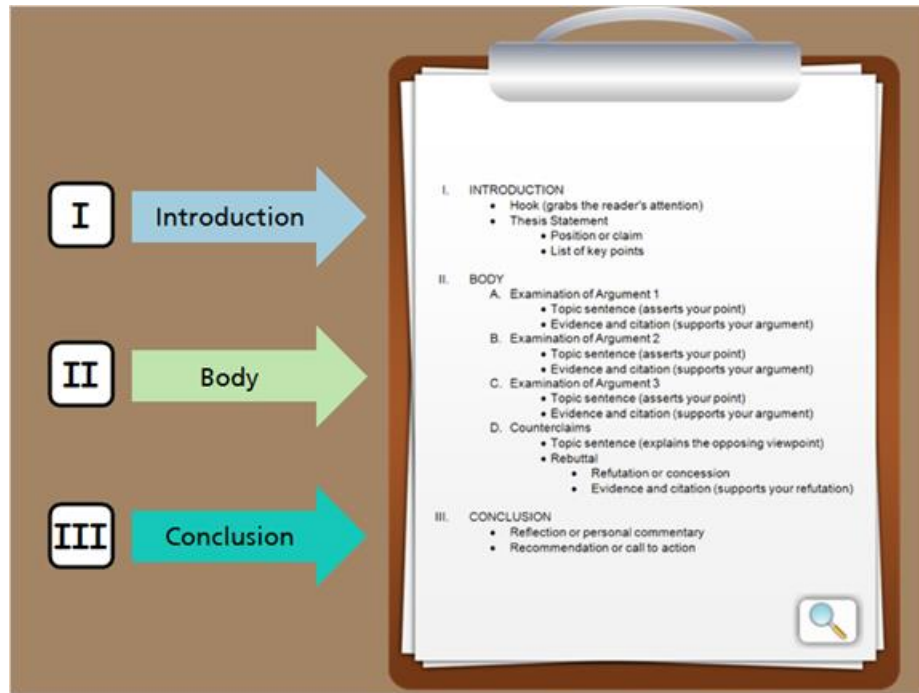


Think about the planning and drafting stages as a cake: If the icing is the specific written *language* of your writing, then the breadlike cake underneath the icing is the *ideas* behind your writing. There is no need right now to focus on the flavor or color of icing you will use to decorate your cake; that time will come later. For now, you should concentrate on making sure that the breadlike base of the cake is just the way you want it before you start decorating it with icing. If the ideas in your paper are illogical, out of order, or ambiguous, then no amount of writing—or icing—will adequately cover it up and make it good.

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## Topic 6 Content: Creating an Outline

### Introduction: Part Four



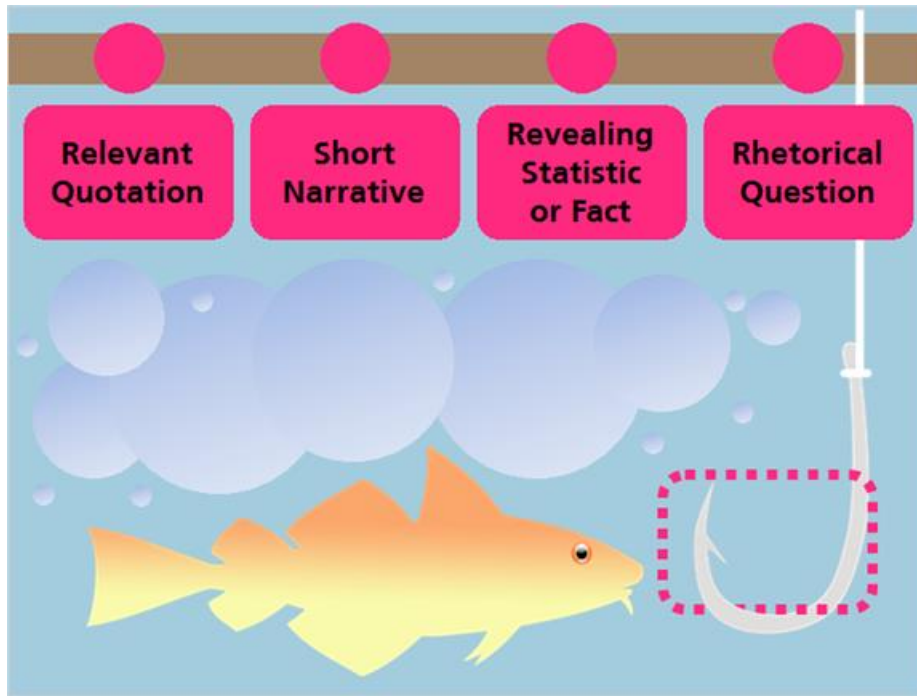
Take a moment now to look at a template for a rough outline, which can be easily converted into a rough draft of your essay. As you can see, there are three major parts to a research paper: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. Each of these three sections is marked using Roman numerals. You can use capital letters to indicate new paragraphs, and then simply fill in the information for each bulleted point to be included in the corresponding paragraph. Although the contents within the introduction, body, and conclusion will vary depending on your needs, goals, and style, every research paper will have at least these three elements.

Click the zoom icon to view the rough outline in greater detail, and then click a section of the rough outline from the menu on the left to learn more about creating an outline.

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#### Hook: Part One



The first part of your research paper is the introduction. Effective introductions contain a "hook" to grab the reader's attention. The hook could be a relevant quotation from a well-known person, a short narrative, a revealing or startling statistic or fact, a rhetorical question, or a thought-provoking image, to name a few. Drag each type of hook at the top and drop it on the fishhook to view some examples.

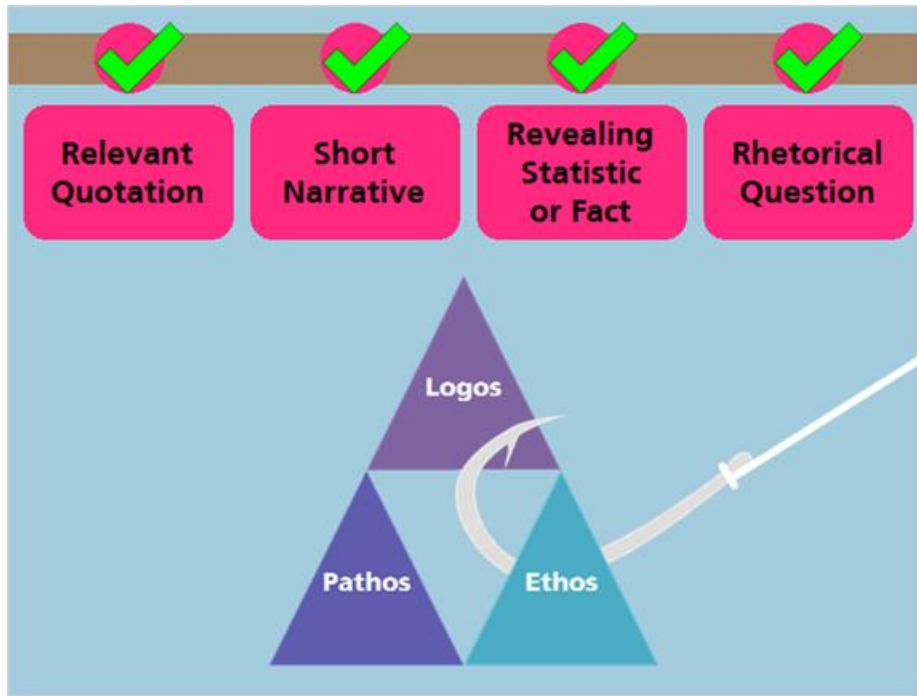
- **Relevant Quotation:** "Prolonged lack of sleep has the same effect on the body as being intoxicated. It's unhealthy and it's dangerous," says sleep researcher Dr. Lee.
- **Short Narrative:** Emily took out her pen and started copying notes into her notebook. As she finished, she listened to the teacher review the differences between eukaryotic and prokaryotic cells. Within minutes, Emily's eyelids became droopy. The next thing she knew, students were rising from their seats and moving to the lab stations. Emily had lines imprinted on her forehead from where she had rested her head on her sleeve while she slept—yet another lesson that she missed and would struggle with to catch up.
- **Revealing Statistic/Fact:** One out of every three students suffers from severe sleep deprivation.
- **Rhetorical Question:** How many hours of sleep do teenagers really need?

Notice that a rhetorical question is not meant to be answered, at least not right away. A rhetorical question is another way of making a statement or emphasizing a point, and it can be used to great effect. The example rhetorical question provided is not seeking information; it is indirectly making a suggestion to the reader. You may have used common examples such as "Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" or "You're not really going to wear that, are you?"

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#### Hook: Part Two

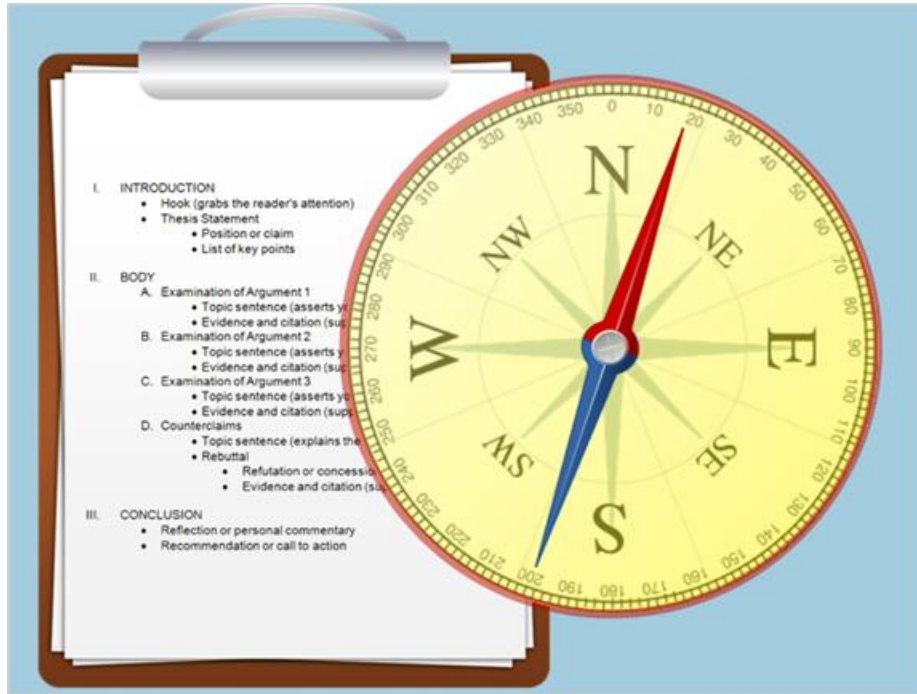


Remember that you do not necessarily have to draft your hook in complete, polished sentences. Feel free to use phrases or descriptions. However, keep in mind the different rhetorical strategies that you have learned. The hook may be a good place to employ logos, pathos, or ethos. Create a hook that you think will best capture the reader's attention and encourage him or her to continue reading.

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### Topic 6 Content: Creating an Outline

#### Thesis



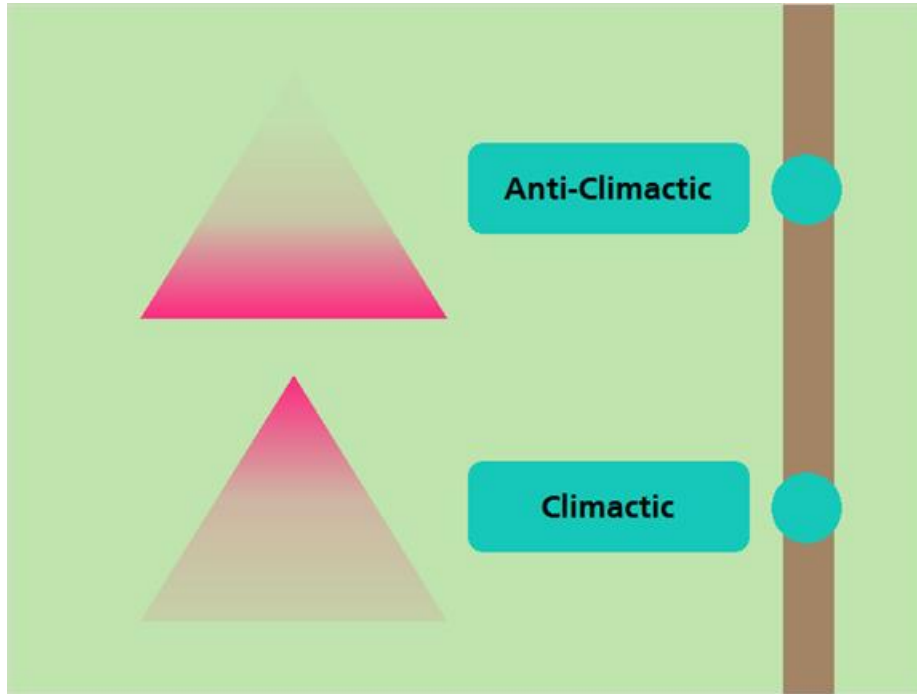
The next part of your rough outline should refer to your thesis statement. For your outline, you can state your thesis in its entirety, or you can briefly summarize your position and list your key points or arguments. The position you take on the issue will dictate the whole direction of your paper, and the key points of your thesis will outline the topics of the body paragraphs that follow.



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#### Organization



The body of your research paper is where you will argue your position with support from the evidence you have collected. If you have three points or arguments in your thesis statement, you will likely have a body paragraph that corresponds to each argument.

For your outline, you need to decide the order in which you want to present your arguments to your reader. There are numerous strategies for organizing this information. For example, you can organize the ideas in a paper chronologically, spatially, or topically. Sometimes writers will use an anti-climactic approach, beginning with their strongest point to engage the reader and maintain interest, similar to the effect that the introductory hook has. In this organizational strategy, the reader should be fairly convinced from the beginning, and the following points—although not as strong as the first—serve to solidify the reader's agreement with the thesis.

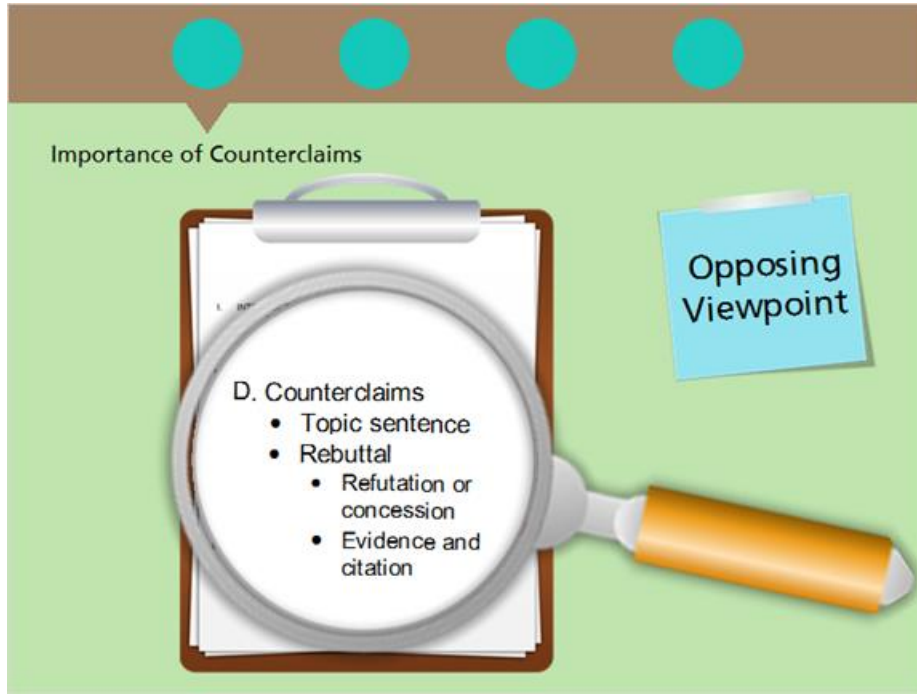
You can further explore various organizational patterns before choosing the one that best suits your thesis. However, it is generally recommended that you use a climactic approach by starting with your least persuasive argument and building up to your most persuasive argument. Take a look at your key points and arrange them in your outline according to the strength and effectiveness of each argument. For each argument in the body of your outline, write a topic sentence or a brief description of the main idea of the body paragraph. Then, make a note of the evidence and its citation that you want to use to support each claim.



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#### The Importance of Counterclaims



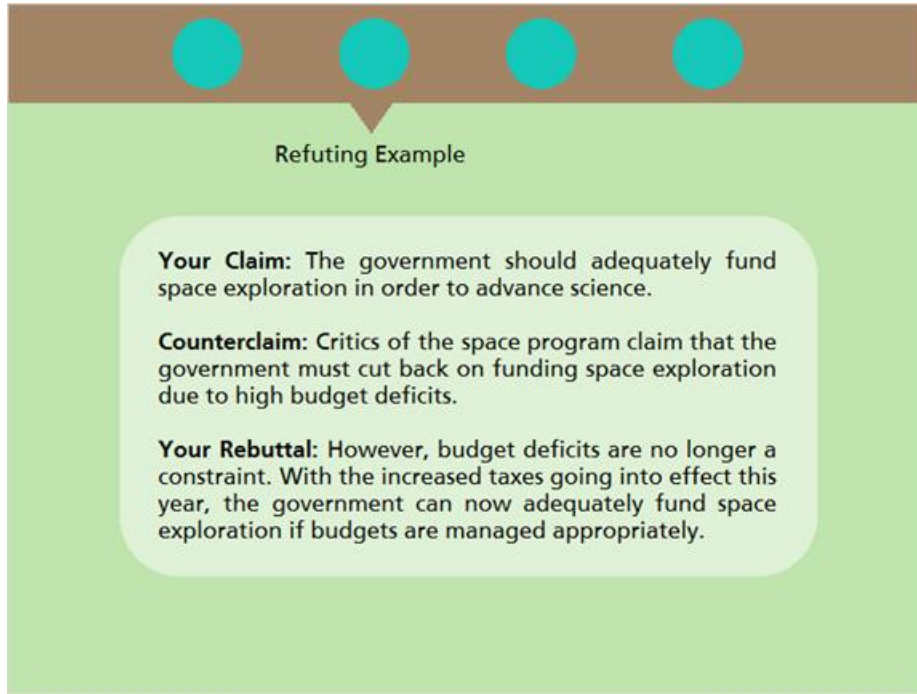
In the outline provided, notice that the final paragraph of the paper's body is dedicated to addressing counterclaims. A counterclaim is a claim that disagrees with the thesis of your paper. In other words, it is the opposing viewpoint to your own. It is always a good idea to acknowledge the existence of viewpoints and claims in opposition to your own. Ignoring your opposition in your argument can be a negligent mistake. If you do not address the opposition, you leave the reader free to accept that opposing viewpoint, and this ultimately hurts your persuasive argument. Be proactive in using your opponent's argument to your advantage.

When addressing a counterclaim in your paper, you have two options: refute or concede. A refutation explains to the reader why the opposition is wrong. On the other hand, a concession acknowledges that the opposition has a valid point or argument. You might wonder why it would be acceptable to agree with a point made by the opposition. Remember, you do not want the reader to conclude that you are unreasonable if the opposing viewpoint actually has a valid argument. However, if you do concede, you must be sure to re-iterate why your claim is still superior to the opposing viewpoint. Your response to each counterclaim is known as a rebuttal. Consider two examples of rebuttals, one with a refutation and one with a concession.

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#### Refuting Example



**Refuting Example**

**Your Claim:** The government should adequately fund space exploration in order to advance science.

**Counterclaim:** Critics of the space program claim that the government must cut back on funding space exploration due to high budget deficits.

**Your Rebuttal:** However, budget deficits are no longer a constraint. With the increased taxes going into effect this year, the government can now adequately fund space exploration if budgets are managed appropriately.

#### Refuting Example

**Your Claim:** The government should adequately fund space exploration in order to advance science.

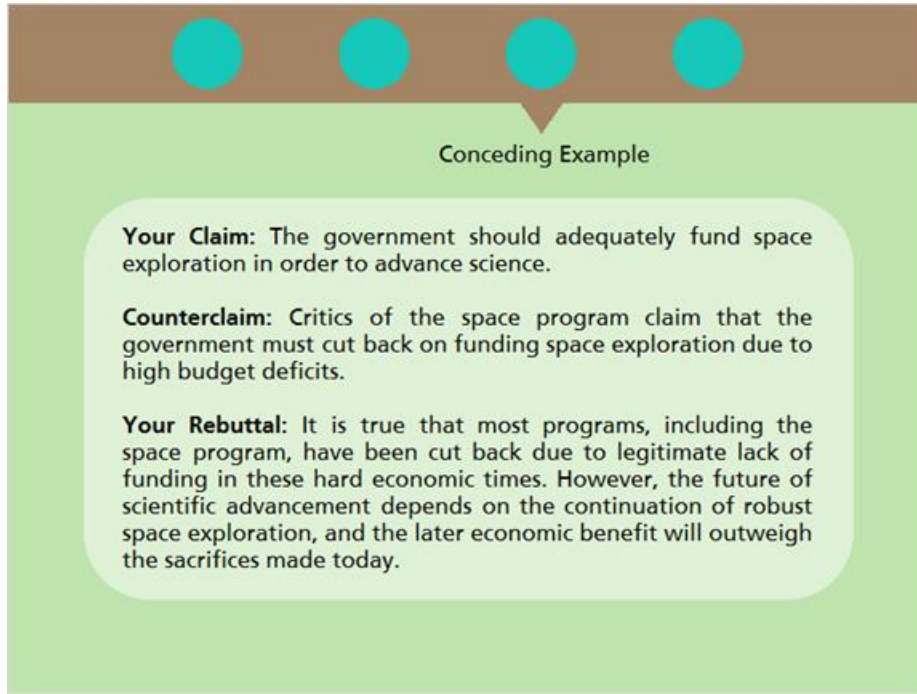
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#### Conceding Example



Conceding Example

**Your Claim:** The government should adequately fund space exploration in order to advance science.

**Counterclaim:** Critics of the space program claim that the government must cut back on funding space exploration due to high budget deficits.

**Your Rebuttal:** It is true that most programs, including the space program, have been cut back due to legitimate lack of funding in these hard economic times. However, the future of scientific advancement depends on the continuation of robust space exploration, and the later economic benefit will outweigh the sacrifices made today.

#### Conceding Example

**Your Claim:** The government should adequately fund space exploration in order to advance science.

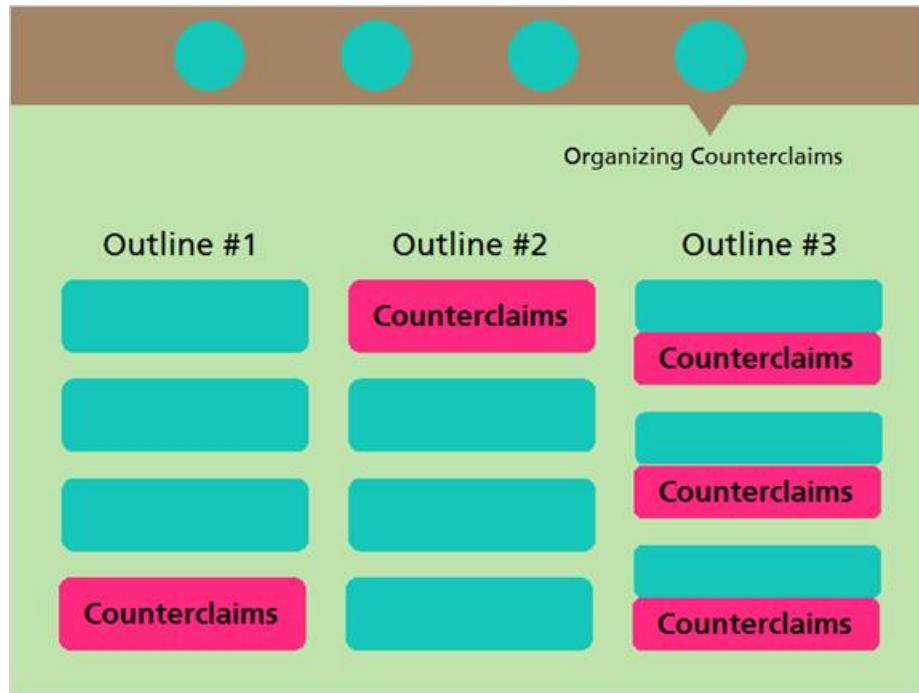
**Counterclaim:** Critics of the space program claim that the government must cut back on funding space exploration due to high budget deficits.

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#### Organizing Counterclaims



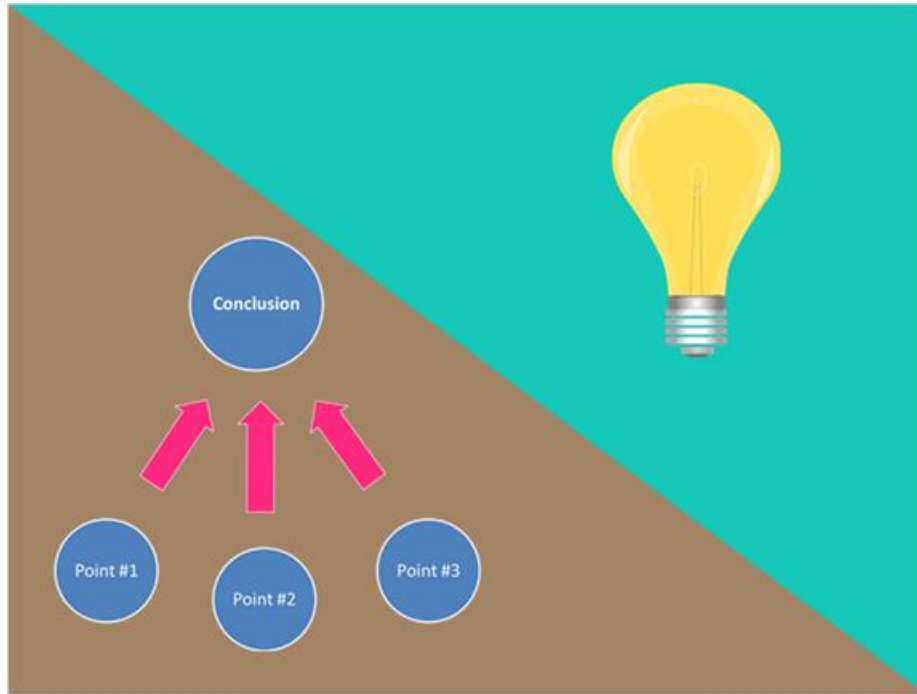
In the outline template provided, the counterclaims are addressed in the last body paragraph. However, you may choose to move the paragraph for counterclaims to the beginning of the paper's body if, for instance, the opposing viewpoint is more familiar to the reader and you want to address it sooner rather than later. Additionally, it might make more sense to integrate counterclaims throughout the body of the paper, especially if you have a counterclaim that is related to your specific argument. The outlines below show these various options visually.

Click each of the outline options to view organization of counterclaims in greater detail.

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#### Personal Commentary

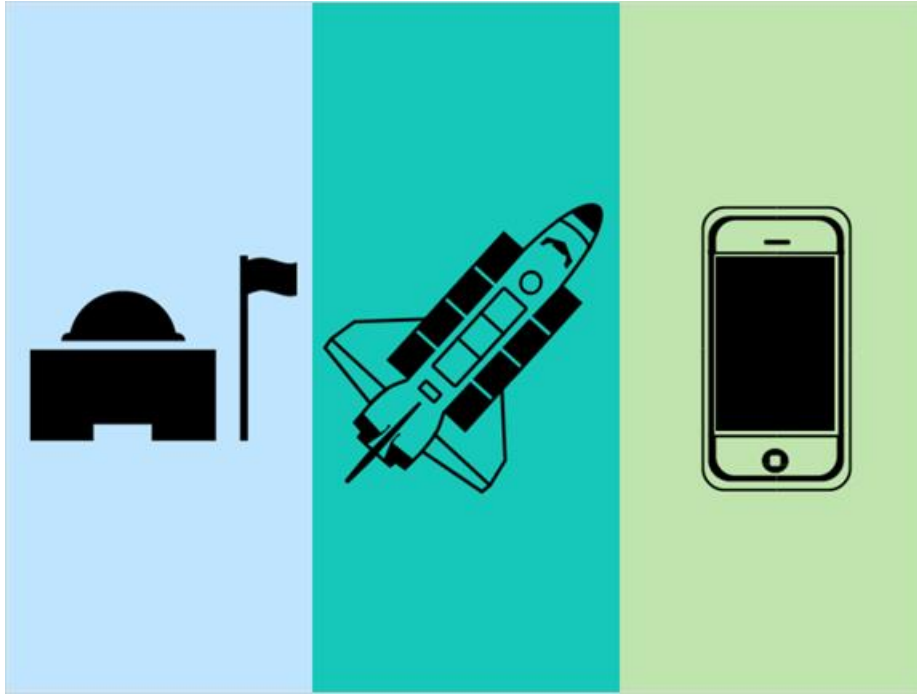


The closing paragraph, or conclusion, of your paper should tie all of the important points together and remind the reader of the claim. You may also want to add your own reflection or personal commentary on the general topic now that the reader has learned everything about the issue that you have presented. This reflection or personal commentary helps bring closure to the topic as the paper winds down, and it should make some connection to the world in which you live.

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#### Call to Action



Before ending your paper, you should offer the reader a recommendation or call to action. After all, it may not be enough to persuade the reader to agree with your viewpoint. Usually writers need to persuade in order to effect change, and that change begins with their readers. So consider what action you can ask your reader to take. For example, if your thesis claims that the government should allocate more funding to space exploration, your call to action may be for readers to contact their congressional representatives and express their support for funding of the space program.

Think about what personal commentary and call to action you would like to include as part of your conclusion, and then add some notes to fill in the Conclusion section of your rough outline.