

## HACKER'S GUIDELINES FOR CONSTRUCTING AN OUTLINE

1. Put the thesis at the top.
2. Make items at the same level of generality as parallel as possible.
3. Use sentences unless phrases are clear.
4. Use the standard system of numbers and letters for the levels of generality. (Note: MS Office will do this for you automatically)  
Order: Roman numerals → letters → small roman numerals → numbers etc.

Example:

- I.
  - a.
  - b.
    - i.
    - ii.
      - 1.
      - 2.
- II.

5. Always use at least two subdivisions for a category, since nothing can be divided into fewer than two parts.
6. Limit the number of major sections in the outline; if the list of roman numerals begins to look like a laundry list, find some way of clustering the items into a few major categories with more subcategories.
7. Be flexible; in other words, be prepared to change your outline as your drafts evolve.

Notice there are at least **2** justifications for each sub-point

### Outline

- THESIS: Unless the risks of cell phones are shown to outweigh the benefits, we should not restrict their use in moving vehicles; instead, we should educate the public about the dangers of driving while phoning and prosecute irresponsible phone users under laws on negligent and reckless driving.
- I. Scientific studies haven't proved a link between use of cell phones and traffic accidents.
    - A. A study by Redelmeier and Tibshirani was not conclusive, as the researchers themselves have admitted.
    - B. Most states do not keep records on accidents caused by driver distractions.
    - C. In a survey of research on cell phones and driving, Cain and Burris report that results so far have been inconclusive.
  - II. The risks of using cell phones while driving should be weighed against the benefits.
    - A. At the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis, researchers found that the risks of driving while phoning were small compared with other driving risks.
    - B. There are safety, business, and personal benefits to using cell phones on the road
  - III. We need to educate drivers on using cell phones responsibly and enforce laws on negligent and reckless driving.
    - A. Educating drivers can work.
    - B. It is possible to enforce laws against negligent and reckless driving; in states that do not do an adequate job of enforcement, the public can lobby for improvement.