

# READINGS IN BASIC ENGLISH *for* Higher Education

Edited by:  
**RICHARD C. IHEJIRIKA**



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*for*  
**HIGHER EDUCATION**

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## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to all our English teachers at all levels of education, who lit the light on us that is now a source of illumination to many.

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## ***Chapter Three***

### **OUTLINING**

*By Richard C. Ihejirika*

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

There are some basic skills students or learners generally need to possess and one of them is ability to draw outline. Outlining is very useful in all aspects of learning including writing, reading and even note taking. An outline has been defined as “a formal, detailed statement of the content and structure of a piece of (either written or spoken) communication”. A well written outline shows at a glance the substance of any written or spoken material, the way they are related and also arranged.

#### **3.2 Uses of Outline**

Outline is very useful in writing. When a writer chooses his topic the next thing he does is to put in outline form the ideas that are relevant to the topic. An outline is to a writer what a building plan is to a builder. Just as a builder builds a solid and beautiful house through the use of a building plan, the same way a writer turns out an excellent write-up through the use of outline. The students are therefore advised to always precede their essay writing with outlining.

One skill that can always facilitate reading comprehension is outlining. Through the process of outlining one can summarize chapter of a book or even





a book as a whole while reading. In note-taking outlining is also very useful. Students are always in the habit of wanting to put down whatever a lecturer says during the course of his teaching. This should not be the case as a good note is the one that attempts to summarize the main ideas of a lecture.

Outlining is a device that can aid the memory. If one begins his writing by putting the ideas down in form of an outline, the chances of forgetting or skipping the ideas are completely ruled out as he would pick the ideas one after the other and develop them. Even in reading and note taking the story is the same as the main ideas put down would help to recall what was read or what was taught. On the whole outlining is a skill that gives room for active participation in the learning process.

### **3.3 How To Draw Outline:**

There are acceptable procedures in drawing outline. Unless the procedures are rigidly followed, the outline may not serve the purpose for which it is meant. A well developed outline should be capable of representing the main ideas as they are related. As outline is meant to show the major divisions and sub-divisions of the substance of a given material, there are various systems of notation that are used to show the relationship between the major and sub-divisions. The notation systems will be discussed here and they include:

1. A combination of roman numerals, capital letters and

Arabic numerals: This is a situation where the three systems are combined, each representing a division.

Example

I, II, III, IV, V, etc. represent major divisions A, B, C, D, E, F, G, etc represent the subdivision of the major division

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, etc represent the subdivision of the first subdivision.

a, b, c, d, e, etc. represent the subdivisions of the second subdivision.

(a), (b), (c), etc represent the subdivisions of the third subdivision.

2. Combination of Arabic numerals and full stops: This is a situation where the Arabic numerals and full stops are combined to show the major divisions and subdivisions. Example:

1. represents major division

1.1 } represents subdivision  
1.2 } of major division  
1.3 }



2. Represents major division

- 2.1.1
  - 2.1.2
  - 2.1.3
  - 2.1.4
  - 2.1.5
  - 2.1.6
- } represents the subdivisions of the second subdivision.

Apart from the notation systems, there are other rules that should be observed when drawing outline. The rules include:

1. The subdivisions should be indented under the preceding division.
2. All entries of the same level should have uniform indentation.
3. In outlining, there is room for multiple subdivisions. What this simply means is that where there is a major division one, there should be a corresponding major division two. It is also necessary that every division must have at least two parts.
4. Outlines should have parallel structures. The grammatical forms adopted for the divisions should be uniform. If, for instance, the first major division is in simple sentence form, the subsequent major divisions should also be written in simple sentences.

### **3.4 Procedure For Outlining A Chapter Of A Book.**

"Use of English: A Text" Compiled by the Department of English, University of Ife outlines the procedure for outlining a chapter of a book as follows:

#### **1. Identifying the Topic**

- i. Use the title of the chapter in determining the topic
- ii. Find the topic sentence of the introductory paragraph.
- iii. The topic is indicated in an outline by the use of Roman numerals I, II, III, etc.

If you are outlining only one chapter in a book, however, it is not necessary to do this.

#### **2. Identifying the Major Subdivisions of the topic**

- i. Read the developmental sentences of the introductory paragraph. These should express the major subdivisions of the topic.
- ii. Indicate these in an outline by the use of capital letters: A, B, C, etc

#### **3. Identifying subdivisions of Major subdivisions**

- i. Read the developmental paragraphs of the chapter. Each major subdivision forms the topic of at least one development paragraph.
- ii. Indicate each new development which explains or illustrates a major subdivision by Arabic numerals, 1, 2, 3, etc. and second by small letters a, b, c, etc.

#### **4. Further Divisions**

- i. You should be able to recognize these by now: e.g. when two or three examples are given of a subdivision which you have entered in the outline under the small letter (a)
- ii. These should be indicated separately by arabic numerals in parenthesis – (1), (2), (3) etc. and by small letters in parenthesis – (a), (b), ©, etc.

#### **MODEL OUTLINES**

Based on our discussions above, we shall go further to demonstrate the procedure by drawing two model outlines.

##### **MODEL OUTLINE 1**

##### **Examination Malpractice**

1. There is examination malpractice at all levels of education,
  - (a) primary
  - (b) secondary
  - (c) tertiary
2. Examination Malpractice is manifested in several ways
  - (a) collaboration
  - (b) impersonation
  - (c) copying
3. Some factors are responsible for examination malpractice
  - (a) moral decadence

- (b) lack of adequate preparation
  - (c) poor teaching
  - (d) high cost of education
4. Examination malpractice has some consequences
- (a) half-baked graduates
  - (b) unemployment
  - (c) expulsion
5. It could be controlled through
- (a) effective teaching and learning
  - (b) reduction in the cost of education
  - (c) de-emphasizing over reliance on certificate

The above is a model outline on the topic "Examination malpractice". It is an embodiment of the main ideas relevant to the topic and how they are related. In drawing the outline, the procedure we discussed earlier is strictly observed on notation. There is the combination of the Arabic numerals and small letters of the alphabet. The Arabic numerals indicate major division while the small letters of the alphabet stand for the subdivision. Also parallel structure is maintained. While the major divisions are written in sentences, the subdivisions are written in phrases. Besides, every subdivision has at least two parts.

### 3.5 MODEL OUTLINE II

Biopower – Energy from living things

#### 1. Battery made of bacteria – Biocell

- 1.1 develop in 1962 for a radio station, range 15 miles
- 1.2 practical amounts of electricity produced from life put to use.
- 1.3 Consisted of a liquid fuel with bacteria that changed the fuel to electricity.
- 1.4 Can be used for a number of purpose
  - 1.4.1 radios
  - 1.4.2 signals for ships
  - 1.4.3 lights
- 1.5 cheap source of electricity because uses a wide range of waste materials.
  - 1.5.1 sea water
  - 1.5.2 grass cuttings and dry leaves

#### 2. History of Biopower

- 2.1 electricity from living cells no new idea
  - 2.1.1 electricity first discovered in fish
  - 2.1.2 Benjamin Franklin found it in lightening
  - 2.1.3 Galvani found it in the nerves and muscles of animals
  - 2.1.4 Human produce it in hearts and bans
- 2.2 Not until the 20th Century that work was begun on producing electricity by bacterial.
  - 2.2.1 1st results published in 1912
  - 2.2.2 since 1960 research has been considerable



and biocell considered practical source of electricity

### 3. The Biocell's Future

#### 3.1 No mass produced models yet

3.1.1 other models simpler and more efficient

3.1.2 biocell rather inefficient – uses 50% of fuel to feed bacteria.

3.2 However, because biocell uses waste as fuel, it is a source of electricity we should exploit.

3.3 Research on biocell has benefited other areas.

3.3.1 Food industries, especially the cheese industry.

3.3.2 Farming and chemistry. (Culled from "Use of English: A Text")

The notation system used in this outline model is a combination of the Arabic numerals and full stop. Apart from the notation system, the model kept to the rules by ensuring parallel structures as well as multiple subdivisions.

Students are advised to practise more on outlining as it is a skill that would aid them a great deal in their learning process.

## Exercises

1. Draw an outline on each of the following topics:
  - i. Accidents on our Roads
  - ii. Sanitation in Urban Areas
  - iii. Poor Reading Culture Among Nigerians
2. Draw an outline of Chapter One of this book.



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