Research Paper Guidelines

Sample Outline

Notice that no correct number of letters or numbers exists; the only determining factor is the number of points you need to make for the required length of your paper.

I. Introduction
   A. Background information connecting the reader to the subject
   B. Thesis statement

COUNTERCLAIM HERE OR

II. First Main Point
   A. First subpoint
      1. Supporting example or detail—either your insight or a critic's comment *paraphrased* or *directly quoted*
         Never start a sentence with a quote that you have not introduced.
         a) First comment on support
         b) Second comment on support
      2. Supporting example or detail (your comment on supporting detail from a critic)
         a) First comment
         b) Second comment
   B. Second subpoint
      1. Supporting example or detail
      2. Supporting example or detail
   C. Third subpoint (same as A, B above)
      At this point continue with D, E... if needed

III. Second Main Point
   A. First subpoint—Comment on subpoint (only one comment on this detail)
      As in the above example, use a **dash** after a point if it is followed by **only one** detail or comment.
   B. Second sub point
      1. Supporting example—only one comment on this example: hence use the dash, not an *a* by itself
      2. Supporting example
         a) Comment
         b) Comment
   Continue with the same sequence alternating numerals and letters until you have completed outlining all of your material.

IV. Critical Thinking Section

COUNTERCLAIM HERE

   A. Incorporate reactions to the source materials
   B. Include insights about the research topic
   C. Synthesize critical thinking threads

V. Conclusion

   Affirm that the thesis has been proven