

Lesson 5: Check Your Outlines - Self-Audit Checklist



Key Learning Concept: A master outline follows strict formal conventions: proper title placement, left-margin boundary respect, period alignment for Roman numerals, capitalization of main topics, and absence of end punctuation.

DIRECTIONS

Check your completed outlines very carefully against the standards below. Answer each checklist question on the blank line with **Yes** or **No**. Examine the model notebook diagram below to see how proper alignment and margin clearance are achieved.

1. Did you write the title on the first line? _____ Did you capitalize the first and all important words in the title? _____
2. Were you careful not to skip any lines between the title and main topics? _____
3. For the sake of neatness, you should **NOT** write in the lefthand margin where the holes are punched in notebook paper. Did you leave the margins clear? _____ Did you also leave a margin on the righthand side of the paper? _____ *(Your papers will look better if you do not write way over to the very righthand edge of the paper!)*
4. Lay a straight edge (ruler or sheet of paper) on the Roman numerals in your outlines. Did you indent Roman numeral I, then backspace to write Roman numeral II, and backspace twice to write Roman numeral III? _____ *(Roman numeral III should not jut out into the lefthand margin. Note the example below!)*
5. Did you capitalize the first word of each topic? _____
6. Did you put periods after each Roman numeral? _____ Were you careful **NOT** to use punctuation marks *after* the topics in the outline? _____

MODEL NOTEBOOK PAGE: CORRECT MARGINS, SPACING & PERIOD ALIGNMENT

☐		Great Lakes	
☐	I. Superior		
	II. Michigan		
☐	III. Erie		
	IV. Ontario		
☐	V. Huron		

THE 9 FORMAL OUTLINING CONVENTIONS & AUDIT BENCHMARKS

1. Title Placement & Margins

- ✓ **First Line Position:** Title is centered on line 1, not crammed above the top margin.
- ✓ **Title Capitalization:** First word and all content words capitalized (e.g., *Great Lakes*, not *great lakes*).
- ✓ **Continuous Flow:** Roman numeral I begins directly on the next ruled line without blank skipped lines.
- ✓ **Margin Clearance:** Both binder punch hole margin (left) and edge margin (right) remain clean.

2. Roman Numerals & Mechanics

- ✓ **Period Plumb Line:** Periods after Roman numerals align vertically (I., II., III., IV., V.).
- ✓ **Text Plumb Line:** The first letter of each topic starts at the exact same vertical indent.
- ✓ **Topic Capitalization:** Every topic begins with an initial capital letter.
- ✓ **No End Punctuation:** Outlines use phrases/words—NEVER place periods or commas at the ends of topics!

The "Backspace" Typographic Principle: Explain to students why Roman numeral III requires "backspacing": Since III is 3 characters wide and I is 1 character wide, Roman numerals must be right-aligned on their periods. This prevents Roman numeral III from jutting left into the punch-hole margin!

METACOGNITIVE SELF-REGULATION

From Generation to Revision:

- **Self-Monitoring:** Shifting students from passive writers to active editors by training them to apply a standardized checklist before submitting work.
- **Visual Cleanliness:** Research shows that spatial clarity in prewriting directly correlates with syntactic fluency in subsequent paragraph drafting.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION STRATEGIES

Tier 1 / Tier 2 Scaffolding (Struggling Learners & ELs):

- **Visual Bookmark Ruler:** Provide a laminated 2x6 inch card with a printed red vertical guideline to hold against their notebook paper.
- **Highlighter Audit:** Have students highlight periods in pink to instantly verify vertical alignment.

Tier 3 / Extension (Gifted & Advanced):

- Have students peer-audit a classmate's Lesson 4 outline using this checklist, providing constructive feedback.

⚠️ DIAGNOSTIC GUIDE: COMMON STUDENT MISCONCEPTIONS & INTERVENTION PROMPTS

Common Misconception	Underlying Cognitive Trap	Teacher Intervention Prompt
Placing Periods at the End of Topics (e.g., "I. Superior.")	Over-generalizing the sentence-ending period rule to outline items.	"An outline lists ideas and topics, not full sentences! Periods only go after the Roman numerals, never at the end of the line."
Aligning Numerals by First Letter (Pushing III. into the margin)	Assuming all text must left-align, which forces wider Roman numerals leftward.	"Line up the periods, not the left side! Roman numerals get wider, so we nudge them backwards to keep the periods straight."
Skipping Blank Lines Between Topics	Attempting to separate items by adding extra line spaces.	"Keep your outline compact and united! Do not skip blank lines between your title and your topics."

STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENT & SCORING RUBRIC (TOTAL: 10 POINTS)

Criteria	Performance Description	Scoring Guide	Max Pts
Audit Accuracy (Items 1–6)	Accurately assesses all 9 checklist verification items against the student's own work.	1 point per verified audit item (9 items)	9 pts
Form Adherence & Neatness	Completed checklist shows clean handwriting and complete evaluative responses.	Full adherence (1 pt), Incomplete (0 pt)	1 pt