

AJ's Mini-Outline

Essay Blueprint

Stage 1 → 2 · How to Write Series · By Anita Ghajar-Selim

Your mini-outline = your essay's GPS. One **What**, three **Whys**, two **Hows** under each — and your whole essay is mapped before you write a single paragraph. Every line below grows into a real sentence, paragraph, or piece of evidence in your draft. No blank-page panic.

THE MINI-OUTLINE — EVERY LINE BECOMES PART OF YOUR ESSAY

INTRODUCTION

What → This will turn into your **thesis statement**.

BODY PARAGRAPHS

Why 1 → This will turn into your **topic sentence (reason 1)** for your body paragraph 1.

How 1.a → This will turn into your **support/evidence 1.a**

How 1.b → This will turn into your **support/evidence 1.b**

Why 2 → This will turn into your **topic sentence (reason 2)** for your body paragraph 2.

How 2.a → This will turn into your **support/evidence 2.a**

How 2.b → This will turn into your **support/evidence 2.b**

Why 3 → This will turn into your **topic sentence (reason 3)** for your body paragraph 3.

How 3.a → This will turn into your **support/evidence 3.a**

How 3.b → This will turn into your **support/evidence 3.b**

CONCLUSION

Sum Up → This will turn into your **conclusion** — restate your thesis in fresh words and pull together your key points.

So What? → This will turn into your **final takeaway** — a suggestion, warning, prediction, or call to action that shows readers why it all matters.

QUICK GUIDE — HOW THE MINI-OUTLINE MAPS TO YOUR ESSAY

INTRODUCTION

What = your thesis statement. One clear sentence that answers the prompt and takes a position.

BODY PARAGRAPHS

Each **Why** = a topic sentence. Each **How** = evidence that proves it. 3 Whys × 2 Hows = 3 full paragraphs.

CONCLUSION

Sum Up restates your thesis + key points. **So What?** tells readers why it matters.

KEEP IT MINI

Write phrases, not full sentences. If a line takes more than 10 seconds, you're drafting — not outlining.

ORDER CAN CHANGE

Save your strongest **Why** for last — readers remember the final reason best.

STUCK ON SO WHAT?

Ask yourself: **who** should care about this, and **what** should they do, expect, or watch out for?

YOUR TURN — BUILD YOUR MINI-OUTLINE HERE

What

Why 1

How 1.a

How 1.b

Why 2

How 2.a

How 2.b

Why 3

How 3.a

How 3.b

Sum Up

So What?

Notes