GUIDELINES FOR OUTLINE FOR THEME # 1

Here is the basic form for the outline for your theme. Read the notes carefully and be sure that you follow the directions. Information in italics is explanatory; don’t copy it!

Title of your paper  [no punctuation here; no verbs]

[Double space after your title.]

The purpose: to analyze ___________ in Red Sky at Morning [no punctuation at the end]
Thesis statement: [Include title and author of the novel as well as the character’s full name. Use a complete sentence here; avoid compound structure. Place a period at the end.]

The plan: to execute the purpose by presenting:

1. opening generalization relevant to the thesis, followed by narrowing examples with explanation; thesis;
2. ;  [*See notes below.]
3. ;
4. ;
5. thesis restatement; analogy with explanation; summation of ideas [no punctuation here]

[Double space after the plan.]

I. Opening generalization relevant to the thesis, followed by narrowing examples with explanation, thesis

II.

A.
B.
C.

III.

A.
B.
C.

IV.

A.
B.
C.

V. Thesis restatement; analogy with explanation; summation of ideas

*Details in steps 2-4 in your plan will offer a brief overview of the way you plan to present material in the body of your paper. Typically each of these steps includes a term such as examples, details, causes, results, reasons, definition, effects, etc., followed by a prepositional phrase of description. For example, step 4 could be as follows: results of Viola’s experiences.
The phrases you present in the plan become the Roman numeral topics in the outline. One difference, however, is that the first word in each topic and subtopic is capitalized.

The subtopics in the outline will present specific details that you will use to illustrate your ideas and ultimately to prove the focus of your thesis. You are required to have at least three subtopics for II, III, and IV. These subtopics may be presented as complete sentences or as topics, but you have to be consistent. A single word is insufficient as a subtopic; you need a phrase or a complete sentence for each. You may also choose to include “sub-subtopics”; however, you must always have a minimum of two. So, for every “1,” you must also have a “2.”

Form in the outline is important; be careful to follow the model. Be careful to align numbers and letters correctly. You can check your Harbrace Handbook for information about outlines on pages 369 and 410-411. Note particularly form for additional subtopics in the sample outline on page 369.