

"Reverse Outlining"

You have written a lot of text – so much that you are unsure whether it still follows a clear line of argument. Reverse Outlining can help you regain perspective on your text. This is how it works:

- 1. Copy your draft into a new document
- 2. Use the comment function to sum up each paragraph into a core sentence. This sentence should answer the questions:
 - What is the main message of this paragraph?
 - What is the **function/move** of this paragraph

If this is difficult, consider whether you have too many messages in this one paragraph.

Example:



- 3. Read one after the other, these core sentences should make sense and read a little like an abstract.
- 4. If this is not the case: Check whether you are talking about the same topic in several paragraphs of your text and whether you can combine them.
- 5. Transfer your changes into your original document.

Sometimes very complex changes are required. Take courage to tackle them and try out new arrangements.

For more on reverse outlining, see:

- https://www.gvsu.edu/wc/reverse-outline-what-is-it-and-how-do-149.htm
- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/the_writing_process/reverse_outlining.html
- https://explorationsofstyle.com/2011/02/09/reverse-outlines/

