Using Outline in Microsoft Word

What is the Outline function?

The Outline function in Word allows you to structure your work into clear sections and subsections. In Word, outlines are also called multilevel lists. This guide will talk you through using this function and how it can help you structure your work and thinking.

Creating an Outline from Scratch.

You can find the outline button by clicking on the view tab. It’s in the ‘document views’ group. Click it to enter Outline View.

In Outline view you will have a much more limited tool bar that focuses on structuring your sections.

You can now add basic sections as I have done in the image above. The Outline tools let you create sections and subsections and move information around. Once you leave outline view, these sections will appear in your document and you can fill your content into the right section.

You also select an outline style using the multilevel list button, so in the next section we will look at this.
Multilevel List

To select an outline style, use the multilevel list button. This is found on the ‘home’ tab in the paragraph section.

This drop-down menu shows you all the pre-set list styles. Mouse over each one to see the details then select your preferred style.

Once you have selected your style you can either start typing straight into the document. Alternatively you can go into Outline view and set up your headings and subheadings there.

Creating an Outline from Scratch.

When you are in Outline view you can create new sections by pressing enter. Each new line will automatically create a new section in this view.

To create a subsection press enter and then tab. You can keep using tab to create smaller and smaller subsections.

If you decide a section would be better as subsection, just click to the right of the section and press tab. If a subsection would actually be better as a main section, you merely delete the tabbed space. You can also use the drop-down menu in the outline view tools to move sections up and down your structure. You can even drop a section back into the body of the text using this menu.
As well as using the enter and tab buttons to move sections around you can also use the tools in the Outline View.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outline Tools</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Promote to Heading 1 Button" /></td>
<td>Promotes the selected item to the highest level of an outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Promote button" /></td>
<td>Promotes the selected item to a higher level of an outline</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Demote button" /></td>
<td>Demotes the selected item to a lower level of an outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Demote to Body Text button" /></td>
<td>Demotes the selected item to the lowest level of an outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Outline Level List" /></td>
<td>List of outline levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Move up button" /></td>
<td>Moves the selected item up within an outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Move down button" /></td>
<td>Moves the selected item down within an outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Expand button" /></td>
<td>Expands the selected item in an outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Collapse button" /></td>
<td>Collapses the selected item in an outline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moving Headings up and down

You may find that once you have set up your structure and filled in some content that you want to rearrange the headings. To do this you need to use the arrow buttons in the Outline view tools.

Click next to the section you want to move to select it.
Then use the arrows to move the section around.

In the images I moved article two down. It’s automatically renumbered and moved all the text to the new location.

**Expanding and Collapsing Headings.**

If you want to see the content of a section in Outline view you can use the blue plus and minus signs to do so.

Simply click next to the section heading and then click the plus button to show the body text.

To collapse the section again, use the minus button.

If you want to change the font or colour of the headings in Outline view, you should highlight the text and then right click to access the font menu.

**Other Style functions**

As well as Outline view, you can use the ‘style’ section on the Home tab to help you improve the layout of your documents. Remember a clear layout makes your work look professional and makes it easier for your marker to see the work you have done.

**Need any further help?**

Please drop the Criminology Library team an email – lawcrimlib@swansea.ac.uk