

Sample Outline in an MLA Paper (Levi)

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Outline

THESIS: Unless the risks of cell phones are shown to outweigh the benefits, we should not restrict their use in moving vehicles; instead, we should educate the public about the dangers of driving while phoning and prosecute irresponsible phone users under laws on negligent and reckless driving.

- I. Scientific studies haven't proved a link between use of cell phones and traffic accidents.
 - A. A study by Redelmeier and Tibshirani was not conclusive, as the researchers themselves have admitted.
 - B. Most states do not keep records on accidents caused by driver distractions.
 - C. In a survey of research on cell phones and driving, Cain and Burris report that results so far have been inconclusive.
- II. The risks of using cell phones while driving should be weighed against the benefits.
 - A. At the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis, researchers found that the risks of driving while phoning were small compared with other driving risks.
 - B. There are safety, business, and personal benefits to using cell phones on the road.
- III. We need to educate drivers on using cell phones responsibly and enforce laws on negligent and reckless driving.

Outline pages are numbered with small roman numerals.

Outline begins with thesis and uses standard format.

Outline is written in complete sentences.

Source: Diana Hacker (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006).

This paper has been updated to follow the style guidelines in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (2009).

Writer's name and page number are typed $\frac{1}{2}$ " from top of each page.

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- A. Educating drivers can work.
- B. It is possible to enforce laws against negligent and reckless driving; in states that do not do an adequate job of enforcement, the public can lobby for improvement.