

Inspiration®

Outlining and Organizing Made Easy

Subject Areas: All subjects

Grade Level: 6 – 12 (ages 11-18)

Time: One 50-minute class period

Lesson Objective:

Students will use outlining strategies to help them organize their ideas and begin drafting a written paper.

Common Core State Standards¹:

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing:

Standard 6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Standard 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Overview:

This lesson introduces outlining and organizing techniques using Inspiration® to students, with the goal of helping them to master crucial steps in the writing process. The reality is that outlining without Inspiration is difficult and stressful for most students, but Inspiration®'s integrated **Diagram View** and **Outline View** help students quickly capture and organize their ideas. They can then easily reorganize their topics and begin drafting their written piece. The project can be transferred to a word processor to complete the writing process.

Preparation:

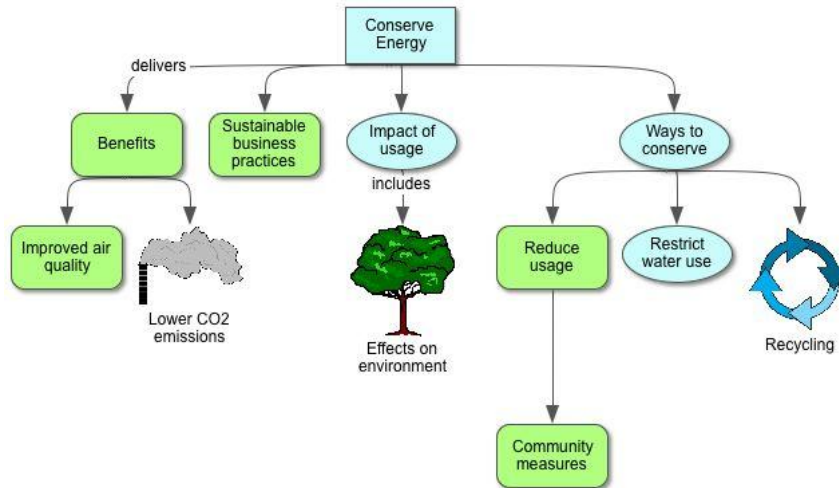
- This lesson requires the Inspiration software application published by Inspiration Software, Inc. 30-day trials can be downloaded at <<http://www.inspiration.com/Inspiration>>.
- Access to library resources and/or the Internet would also be helpful for student research.

Lesson:

1. Ask the students for a show of hands: Who has created an outline to help them with a writing assignment? Then ask, who thinks outlining is easy? If anyone raises their hand, ask them what techniques they use to help them, but most likely none of them will. The reality is that outlining without Inspiration is very challenging for most students. Tell them that today they will learn how to use Inspiration's **Outline View** to help make the process of organizing their notes and creating an outline surprisingly easy. Explain that a good outline is the organizational "backbone" for a strong piece of writing.
2. Show them how to open Inspiration and point out the **Outline** button on the Inspiration **Starter** screen. Tell them that they could start a project directly in that view, but that today they are going to let Inspiration do the work of creating the basic outline. Instead, click either the **Diagram** or **Map** button on the Inspiration **Starter** screen to start a new project brainstorm, or open an



existing project. One possibility is to continue with the example from the *Brainstorming Visually* lesson plan shown at the top of the next page.



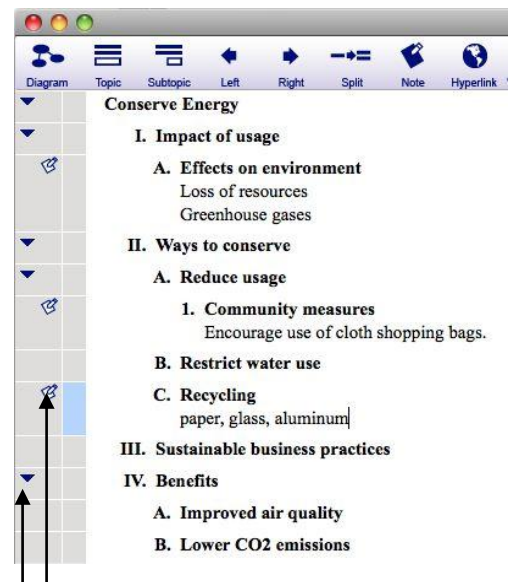
3. Tell students that if they start brainstorming a project as a mind map or diagram, then with just a click of the **Outline View** button on the left side of the **Main** toolbar (*click it*), Inspiration will generate a linear outline for them. Then they can finish organizing their information and adding details. Explain that this is an important organizational step in the writing process.

4. Demonstrate how to reorganize ideas using **Drag and Drop**; simply click an idea and drag it to a new location in the outline.

5. Demonstrate how to use the **Note** tool to add more detail to the outline, and show the alternate way to do it: Select a topic or subtopic and press the **Enter** (or **Return**) key and start typing. Explain that they can draft entire paragraphs in notes—up to 15 pages of text per note!

6. Show students how they can hide subtopics and notes temporarily to focus on the main topics. Demonstrate how to use the **Hide Subtopic** or **Hide Note Quick Control** buttons to the left of topics with subtopics and/or notes.

7. Show students how they can display their diagram **Symbols** to reinforce visual connections to the content. Demonstrate how to use the **Show Symbols** button in the **Formatting** toolbar at the bottom of the screen to turn **Symbols** on and off.



Hide Subtopic & Hide Note Quick Control buttons

Show Symbols button:



8. Also show students how they can hide and reveal **Link Text** by clicking the **Show Link Text** button on the **Formatting** toolbar.

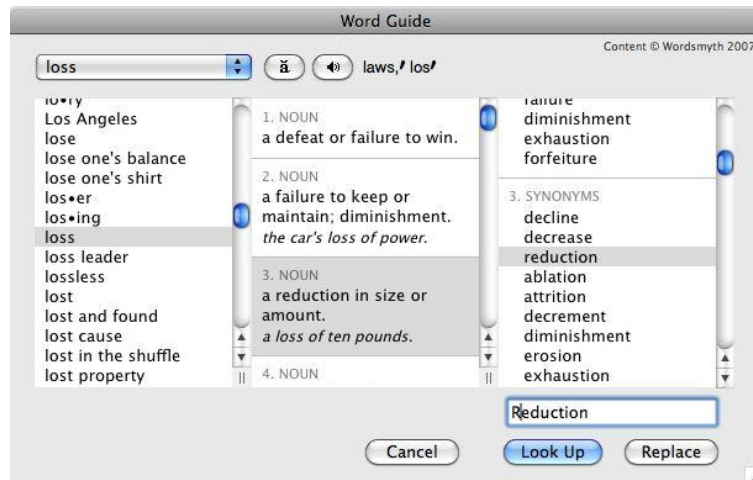
Show Link Text button:



9. Explain that as students continue the research process, they will likely want to add completely new topics to the outline. To add a new topic, all they need to do is click the **Topic** button on the **Main** toolbar. The new topic will be inserted and assigned a prefix in the outline.



10. Demonstrate how to add subtopics with the **Subtopic** button to the right of the **Topic** button.
11. Demonstrate how to use the **Move Left** button to promote the level of the subtopic and the **Move Right** button to move it back.
12. Point out the **Word Guide** to students. Explain that it is an integrated dictionary and thesaurus that will support them with the writing and editing process. From within Inspiration they can see and hear pronunciations, definitions and synonyms, and choose the most appropriate word to convey the exact meaning they intend. Demonstrate how to use it by clicking on a word such as "loss" and then the **Word Guide** button on the **Main** toolbar. Point out the various definitions of the word, the pronunciation, and a scrolling list of synonyms and antonyms that correspond with the respective definition. To replace a word with one they would prefer to use, they simply select it and click **Replace**. For example, "Loss" could be replaced with "Reduction."



13. Explain that when students are satisfied with their outline and have added all the writing they can to it, they can click the **Transfer** button to continue the writing process and create a formal paper in a word processor.

Transfer button:



14. Tell students that organizing and outlining are indispensable for helping take their projects "to the next level" of excellence. Complex projects like research papers and reports are much easier if they break the many steps down into manageable chunks using outlining strategies.
15. Give students the rest of the class period to practice what they just learned using Inspiration. Assign a topic for them to outline, or let them choose an existing diagram or mind map to adapt into an outline.

Adaptations / Extensions:

- At the start or end of your lesson, show students one or more of the **Outline View** training videos, and demonstrate how one way they can access the videos is from the **Help** menu>**Training Videos>Outline View**.
- Students can make presentations to the class about what they learned using the **Presentation Manager**. Having students create a visual presentation with key talking points will help them to better understand and remember the information, in addition to helping the whole class to learn about the topic. See the *Creating Oral Presentations I and II* lesson plans for more information about this process.

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