



## SKILLBUILDER

# Making an Outline

## ►► Defining the Skill

Before writing a research report, you must decide on your topic and then gather information about it. When you have all of the information you need, then you begin to organize it. One way of organizing your information before writing the report is to make an outline. An outline lists the main ideas in the order in which they will appear in the report. It also organizes the main ideas and supporting details according to their importance. The form of every outline is the same. Main ideas are listed on the left and labeled with capital Roman numerals. Supporting ideas are indented and labeled with capital letters. Supporting details are indented farther and labeled with numerals.

## ►► Applying the Skill

The outline to the right is for a biography of Marie Curie, one of the great physicists of all time. Use the strategies listed below to help you learn how to make an outline.

### How to Make an Outline

**Strategy 1** Read the main ideas of this report. They are labeled with capital Roman numerals. Each main idea will need at least one paragraph.

**Strategy 2** Read the supporting ideas for each main idea. These are labeled with capital letters. Notice that some of the main ideas require more supporting ideas than others.

**Strategy 3** Read the supporting details that are included in this outline. These are labeled with numerals. The writer of this outline did not include the supporting details for some of the supporting ideas. It is not necessary to include every piece of information that you have. An outline is intended merely as a guide for you to follow as you write the report.

**Strategy 4** A report can be organized in different ways. This biography is organized chronologically, that is, according to time. It starts with Curie's birth and ends with her legacy after death. The outline follows the order of events in her life. A report can be organized in other ways, such as comparing and contrasting or according to advantages and disadvantages. The outline should clearly reflect the way the report is organized.

- 1** I. Who Was She?
  - A. Polish-born physicist
  - 2** B. Birth and early life
  - C. Schooling
    1. In secret in Poland (women were not allowed to enter
    - 3** higher education)
    2. In France at the Sorbonne
      - 4** a. license of physical sciences, 1893
      - b. license of mathematical sciences, 1894
- II. The Physicist
  - A. Life and work with husband, Pierre Curie
    1. Discoveries
      - a. polonium, summer 1898
      - b. radium, fall 1898
    2. Nobel Prize in Physics, 1903
      - a. shared with Henri Becquerel
      - b. Marie was the first woman to ever be awarded a Nobel Prize
  - B. Her own accomplishments
    1. Became the first female professor at the Sorbonne
      - a. took over Pierre's position after his death, 1906
    2. Her research on radioactivity was published, 1910
    3. Nobel Prize in Chemistry, 1911

## ►► Practicing the Skill

Look through Chapter 7 and find a topic that interests you. Gather information about that topic, and then write an outline for a report about that topic. Be sure to use the correct outline form.