**Section two: Taking Notes**

**2.2. Outlining.** It is the process of dividing and subdividing the ideas that mark the content of a lecture, an excerpt, a speech or other materials. Generally speaking, an outline is the structure of what one reads or listens to. It helps in organizing the content and distinguishing between the main ideas, sub-ideas and details.

The main ideas, major points, sub-points and details are organized in a given way as is shown in the outline form below which is taken from Coman and Heavers (1998, p.29):

I. Main idea or topic sentence

1. Major points providing information about the topic
2. Sub-points that describe the major point
3. Supporting details for the sub-points

Every level of sub-ideas takes a specific number or letter and is indented so as to be distinguished from the preceding and following levels.

In the topic outline, the writer relies on phrases and words to express the ideas to be discussed in a given material. In the sentence outline, full sentences are used and more details are included.

**Outline Sample**

In listening to a lecture about *the effects of video games on children,* the items below should be included in the outline.

*Positive effects, negative effects, foster cognitive abilities, increase thinking speed, addiction, increase aggression, decrease empathy,*

**Step 1**: Examine the items carefully and classify them as follows:

* Main ideas:
* Major points :
* Sub-ideas :
* Supporting details :

**Step 2:** Arrange the items in the appropriate way, i.e. mark each item with the corresponding numeral (Roman or Arabic) or letter (lower-case or upper-case), and indent correctly. Moreover, you should follow logic in the division. That is, if you have a I, you need a II. If you put an A, you must include a B, etc.