Creating an Outline in Reverse
An outline in reverse is an outline you create after you have written your paper; that is, you outline the actual paper you have in front of you, rather than a paper that you expect to write. Your outline should be quite detailed and should contain the topic of each paragraph, as well as the subtopics and examples covered in each paragraph.

After you have outlined the current draft of your paper, check the outline to see if you have left anything out—have you left out an important point, an example, textual evidence to back your example or claim, or a counter-claim (a claim someone could legitimately make that contradicts your argument)? Then, insert whatever you have left out for your next draft.

Documenting Coherence Paths
One of the ways we create coherence when we write is by creating a chain of logic in which we move from topic to topic under the “old-new” contract, also known as the “familiar/unfamiliar” contract; that is, we always begin a paragraph with old information, or information that is familiar to our readers, before we introduce new information, or information that is unfamiliar to our readers.

Sometimes, as in an introduction, beginning with familiar information means that we draw on readers’ world knowledge; often, however, as in an interior paragraph, beginning with familiar information means that we have introduced the topic we plan to discuss further in a previous sentence, paragraph, or transition.

For this part of the assignment, underline the topic of each of your sentences with a colored pen. Then, draw arrows to show the connections between topics as you move through your paper.

Writing Your Best Thesis Sentence
As you work to refine your thesis sentence (or sentences), remember to make your thesis as concrete as possible; that is, tie your thesis to the works that you’ll be discussing by using the works’ names and state as explicitly as possible what you’ll be arguing about those works. Remember also that your thesis should be focused, debatable, and divisible. Having a clear thesis sets up your argument so that it unfolds logically and efficiently.