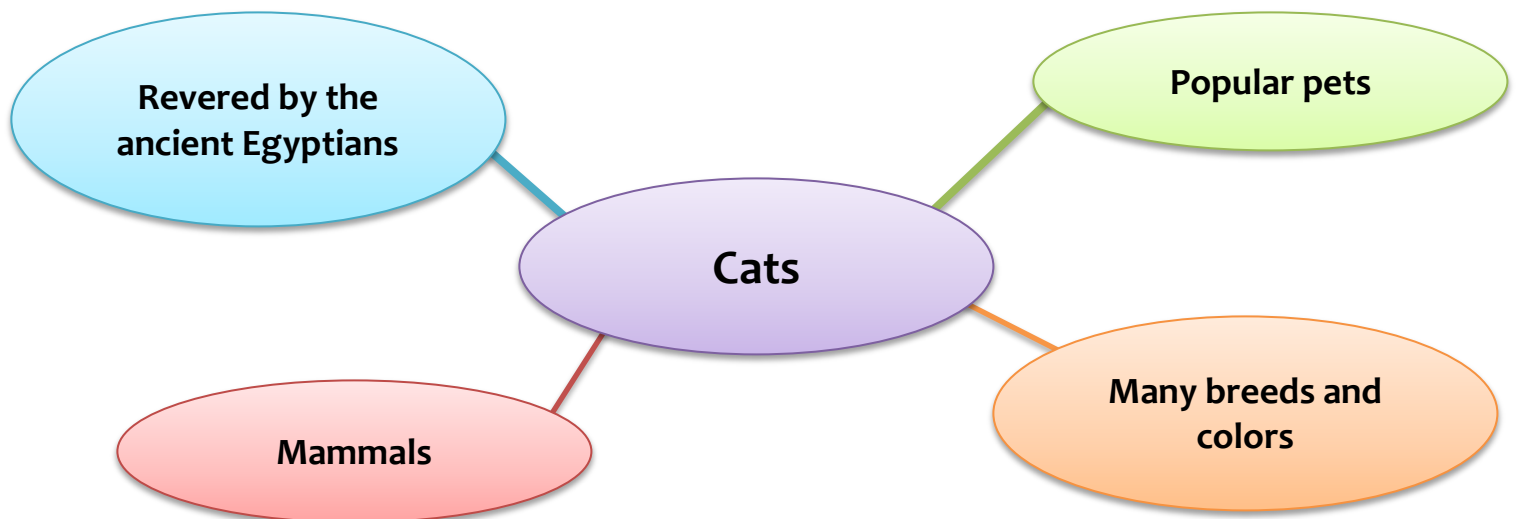# Kids InfoBits Toolbox – Creating an Outline

The **Kids InfoBits Toolbox** tip sheets are designed to help young researchers prepare a written report. This document will explain **what an outline is and why it's useful** when writing a report.

> Need more help with your report? Visit http://solutions.cengage.com/gale-training/materials/tip-sheets/ for more **Kids InfoBits Toolbox Tip Sheets**!

Some people like to write their reports using the web they created. Others prefer to use an outline form. You may use whichever style you prefer. There are samples for creating an outline using a web that was created and making an outline without using a web.

If you have already created a web to organize your ideas for your topic, creating an outline will be very easy. Look at your web. Each circle represents one grouping for your outline. To make an outline, list each word in the circle in outline form. Here is a sample from a web about cats.
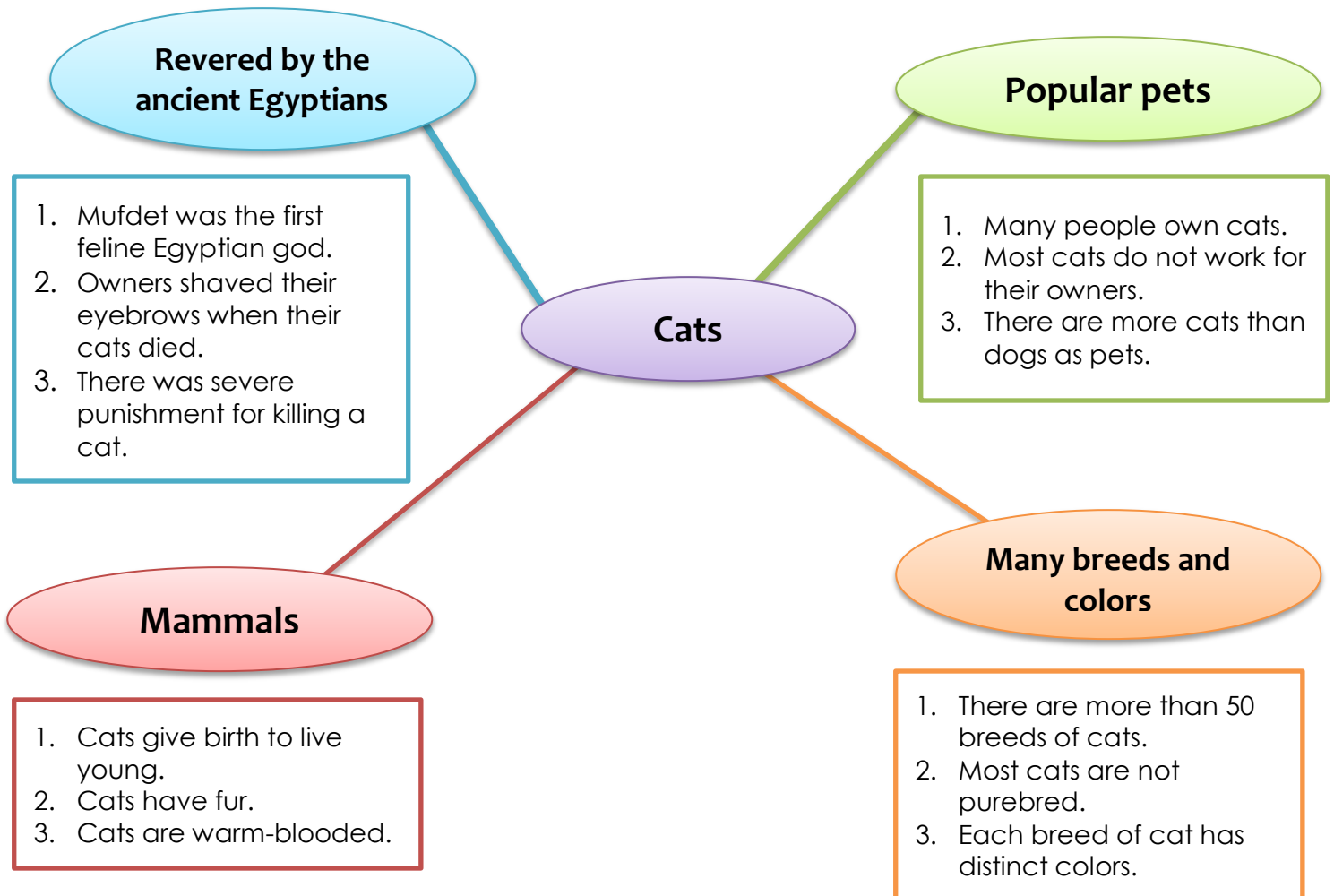

An outline form of the same information would be written like this.

    I.   Popular pets
   II.   Many breeds and colors
  III.   Mammals
  IV.   Revered by ancient Egyptians

There is one Roman numeral written for each of the topics in the circles. To help you decide which order to write them in, think about which topic you would like to write about first.

You can add details to the outline in the same way you added details to your web. Look at our complex web about cats on the next page.

Revered by the ancient Egyptians

1. Mufdet was the first feline Egyptian god.
2. Owners shaved their eyebrows when their cats died.
3. There was severe punishment for killing a cat.

Popular pets

1. Many people own cats.
2. Most cats do not work for their owners.
3. There are more cats than dogs as pets.

Cats

Mammals

1. Cats give birth to live young.
2. Cats have fur.
3. Cats are warm-blooded.

Many breeds and colors

1. There are more than 50 breeds of cats.
2. Most cats are not purebred.
3. Each breed of cat has distinct colors.

Let's write it in an outline form using the same headings. We will add the details as subheadings.

I. Popular pets
    A. owned by many people
    B. most do not work for owners
    C. more cats than dogs as pets
II. Many breeds and colors
    A. more than 50 breeds of cats
    B. most are not purebred
    C. each breed has distinct colors
III. Mammals
    A. give birth to live young
    B. have fur
    C. are warm blooded
IV. Revered by ancient Egyptians
    A. Mufdet was first feline Egyptian god
    B. owners shaved eyebrows to show sorrow when cat died
    C. severe punishment for killing a cat in ancient Egypt

If you have not already created a web, you can still make an outline to help you organize your writing. There are just a couple of steps to follow.

1. Write your main ideas about the topic. Label each of these with a Roman numeral. These are called headings.
2. List details about each of your headings. The details are called subheadings. They are labeled with letters of the alphabet.

Your outline will look like this; look at the example on the previous page to see how our cats report outline would look.

    I.   Heading
        A. Detail
        B. Detail
        C. detail
    II. Heading
        A. Detail
        B. Detail
        C. Detail
    III. Heading
        A. Detail
        B. Detail
        C. Detail
    IV. Heading
        A. Detail
        B. Detail
        C. Detail

The number of headings you use will depend on the number of ideas you choose to write about. Most reports should will have at least 5 paragraphs. The first paragraph will be your introduction. The last paragraph will be your conclusion. The middle paragraphs will contain the details about your topic. Check with your teacher to see if he or she wants you to write a certain number of paragraphs.

You can download worksheets to help you create an outline here:

Creating an outline using a web: http://assets.cengage.com/training/CreateOutlineWebWsht.pdf

Creating an outline without a web: http://assets.cengage.com/training/CreatOutlineNoWeb.pdf

Need more help with your report? Visit http://solutions.cengage.com/gale-training/materials/tip-sheets/ for more **Kids InfoBits Toolbox Tip Sheets**!