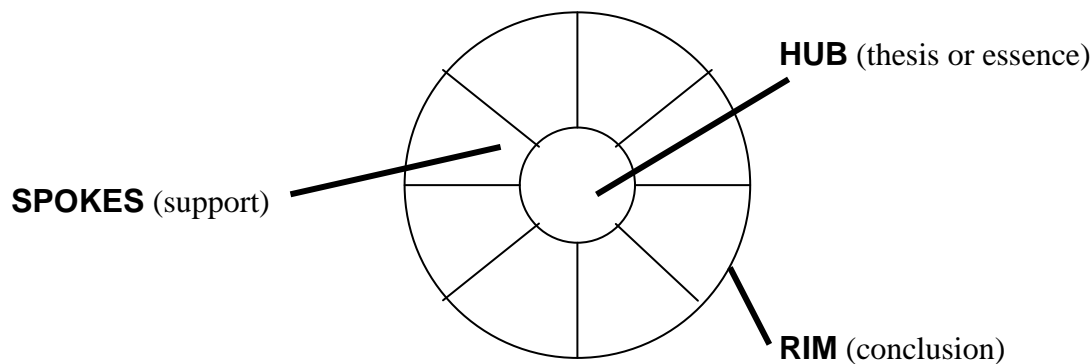


Recycling the Wheel: An Alternative to the Traditional Outline

Not all writers are linear thinkers; many, if not half, think concentrically. Thus, the linear outlining method (with its Roman numerals and letters) is a visual paradigm that is not useful to all students.

The wheel paradigm is suitable for concentric thinkers who are writing critical analyses or descriptive (not, of course, narrative) essays.

Your essay (**wheel**) should have an exciting introduction that establishes your thesis (**hub**). It should provide concrete evidence to forward your argument (**spokes**). And, it should come to a strong conclusion (**rim**).



WHEEL: The essay.

HUB: The essay's thesis (formal), organizing principle, or dominant impression (description). The hub is the essence, the central, significant idea around which the wheel revolves. The hub gives the wheel its focus, control, unity, and meaning. Without the hub, the wheel is lost, for it has no central, guiding intelligence: it goes everywhere and nowhere. In a formal essay, the hub is stated outright; in a creative description, it is suggested.

SPOKES: The essay's minor thesis (formal), supporting evidence, or specific, vivid details (description). An essay may have any number of spokes, but each spoke must connect to the hub. If there is no solid attachment, the wheel not only does not go anywhere, it falls apart. Each spoke springs out of the hub and, in its own way, reflects and comments upon it. Careful craftsmanship will ensure smooth movement or flow (clear transitions) from spoke to spoke

RIM: The essay's conclusion, a forceful wrap-up of the entire wheel that proves to the reader that your ideas all hang together. The rim is not mere recapitulation of your spokes: that would be boring and mechanical. The rim does more than simply mirror the hub, for it also encompasses the spokes and leaves your reader with the feeling that your mind is still blazing with ideas.