A function outline consists of brief statements about how each paragraph functions within an essay in terms of its relationship either to the thesis or to one of its supporting points; the purpose of writing a Function Outline is to focus attention on thesis development and coherence and to initiate revision. Function outlines may be written either in the margins of the essay itself or on a separate sheet of paper, such as the Function Outline Worksheet below:

**Steps For Writing a Function Outline:**

1. Number all the paragraphs in the essay.

2. Underline the thesis statement. Write the thesis statement below.

   **Thesis Statement:**

   __________________________________________________________

3. Skim the essay, underlining the main supporting points. Briefly summarize these points:

   **First main point:**

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   **Second main point:**

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   **Third main point:**

   __________________________________________________________

   **Fourth main point:**

   __________________________________________________________

   **Fifth main point:**

   __________________________________________________________
4. Go through the essay, paragraph by paragraph, noting how each one functions to support the main point of the essay. As you read, think about the following questions: Does the paragraph develop a main supporting point? Does it provide background material? Is it an example? Does it present a counter-argument? Locate specific words or cueing devices in the paragraph to refer you back to the thesis and remind the reader of the main point to be developed. If cueing devices do not appear, think about what material you might want to add. Other questions to consider: Are there places in the paragraph that seem to head in another, perhaps related, direction? If so, can these sections be refocused or do you wish to modify the thesis to accommodate a potential new direction?

In the space below, indicate the function of each paragraph in the essay:

Paragraph
#1

Paragraph
#2

Paragraph
#3

Paragraph
#4

Paragraph
#5
Having worked through the entire essay, note which areas of the paper that need modifications or elaboration. Do you feel that the thesis statement should be modified in any way? If so, what cueing and support would be needed?

*Adapted from GA pp. 250-252.