Research Paper Outline Worksheet

1. **Introduction**: (introduces topic in interesting way; introduces key ideas to help explain your argument)

   **Thesis Statement**: (your argument & road map)

2. **Background Paragraph**: (information to help reader understand the broad context of your topic)

3. **Section/Subtopic 1**: _______________________________________________________________________
   **Evidence**:
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 
   How does this prove your thesis?

4. **Section/Subtopic 2**: _______________________________________________________________________
   **Evidence**:
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 
   How does this prove your thesis?

5. **Section/Subtopic 3**: _______________________________________________________________________
   **Evidence**:
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 
   How does this prove your thesis?

6. **Counter Arguments Paragraph**: (explain the arguments against your thesis and refute them)

7. **Concluding Section/Paragraph**: (restate thesis, summarize main points, offer insight to the larger significance of your topic and thesis)
Sample Outline – “How did Great Depression affect the unity of the United States?”

1. Introduction: Introduce your argument and end with your thesis statement.
   a. Set the scene and include background information that helps the reader understand your position
   b. **Thesis Statement:** 1. provable, 2. arguable, 3. how you will prove your argument (Road map)
      
      *Example: Despite the unifying messages of hope from President Franklin Roosevelt, the Great Depression pulled the country apart as discrimination increased, families were separated, and the division between social classes grew.*

2. Background Paragraph: Additional background information on your subject, event, person, etc. that helps the reader understand what you are writing about.
   a. What caused the Great Depression?
   b. The effort the government made to fix it – New Deal
   c. How GD was different than previous decade

3. Section/Subtopic 1:
   **Topic Sentence:** Controlling sentence that tells you what the section/paragraph is going to be about. It is kind of like a “mini-thesis” in that it is an argument and you say how you will prove it. *(Example: Economic hardships of the times increased the nature and extent of discrimination.)*
   a. Job competition
      1. Mexican Americans—deportations
      2. African Americans—increased racism, Jim Crow laws expand
      3. Married Women—feared they would take away men’s jobs
   b. Increased racial violence—(list specific examples)
   c. Oakies faced discrimination in California (list examples)

   **Clincher Sentence:** This sentence ties what you discussed in this section to your thesis statement.
   *(Example: The discrimination during the 1930s widened already existing divisions between race, class and gender causing further fractures in the country.)*

4. Section/Subtopic 2:
   **Topic Sentence:** Another way in which the country suffered divisions was in the breakdown of the family structure.
   a. Hobos – men left their families to look for work
   b. Kids left to raise themselves
      1. Juvenile delinquents
      2. Fewer children went to school
   c. Women went to work—lower pay, even when they’re sole breadwinners
   d. Statistics reveal family trends: Divorce rates increased, marriage and birth rates decreased

   **Clincher sentence:** The family was a microcosm of the country; as traditional families disintegrated, so did the foundation of the country.

5. Continue with this section format for as many subtopics or body paragraphs that are necessary.

6. Counter Arguments Paragraph: Explain the arguments against your thesis and refute them
   a. FDR’s role as a unifying force and inspirational speaker
      *Refute: many felt loyal to FDR, but that didn’t change their relationship with others*
   b. New Deal provides range of jobs
      *Refute: jobs are mainly limited to younger white men; causes animosity*
   c. Pop-culture (radio, film) expands to unite country with common language, experiences

7. Lastly, include a **concluding paragraph** (or paragraphs) that summarizes your main points, restates your thesis, and offers a connection to the larger historical significance of your argument or issue.