What is reverse outlining?
Turning a full text into an outline of key ideas.

Reverse outlining is a helpful tool or strategy for:
- Reading comprehension and summarizing complex information
- Helping readers take effective notes that group new ideas and examples appropriately
- Helping writers visualize the flow or organization of their paper to help determine if reorganization is a necessary part of revising

How do I reverse outline?
First, write down the topic of each paragraph, if outlining for a paper, or section, if outlining a chapter of a book (often bolded headings), in a left column. These ideas are meant to work as quick references. In the right column, write down how the paragraph (or section) topic advances the overall argument of the text. Then, expand these notes into a phrase outline.

SAMPLE REVERSE OUTLINE

Notes

Autism
Social Difficulties Perceiving/understanding facial expression/sensory information
Lack of focus

Overcoming Challenges Therapy (occupational, psychological)
Medications

Turning Notes into an Outline

I. Autism
   A. Social difficulties
      1. Perceiving and understanding facial expressions and sensory information
      2. Lack of focus
   B. Overcoming challenges
      1. Therapy
         a. Occupational
         b. Psychological
      2. Medications