42. More on Structuring Sections and Essays

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1) Skeletons
2) Outlining Essays
3) Smooth Essays

Obligatory Literature

- [Cabell-BeyondLife] James Branch Cabell. Beyond Life. In Editor: Christopher Morley. Modern Essays
    - http://www.gutenberg.org/3/8/2/8/38280/
- [Russel-Worship] Bertrand Russell. A Free Man's Worship. Also in Morley.
- [Tomlinson-BedBooks] Bed Books and Night Lamps. Also in Morley.

References

▶ [Parks] Franklin-Parks. Writing Structured Paragraphs and Essays.

▶ [Schaum] Molly McClain, Jacqueline D. Roth. Schaum's Quick Guide to Writing Great Essays. McGraw-Hill.

▶ [Turner] Adam Turner. English Solutions for Engineering and Sciences Research Writing: A guide for English learners to publish in international journals. English Writing Lab Center for Teaching and Learning and College of Engineering, Hanyang University, Seoul, Korea

     – www.hanyangowl.org

▶ Erlyn Baack. Advanced Composition for Non-Native Speakers of English. eslbee.com Website

▶ [Mills-Logic] John Stuart Mills. A System of Logic. 1882. Harper&Mills. eBooks@Adelaide. The University of Adelaide Library

Gutenberg.org References

► [Abbot-NavalHistory] Author: Willis J. Abbot. The Naval History of the United States. Volume 1 (of 2).
http://www.gutenberg.org/2/2/3/0/22305/

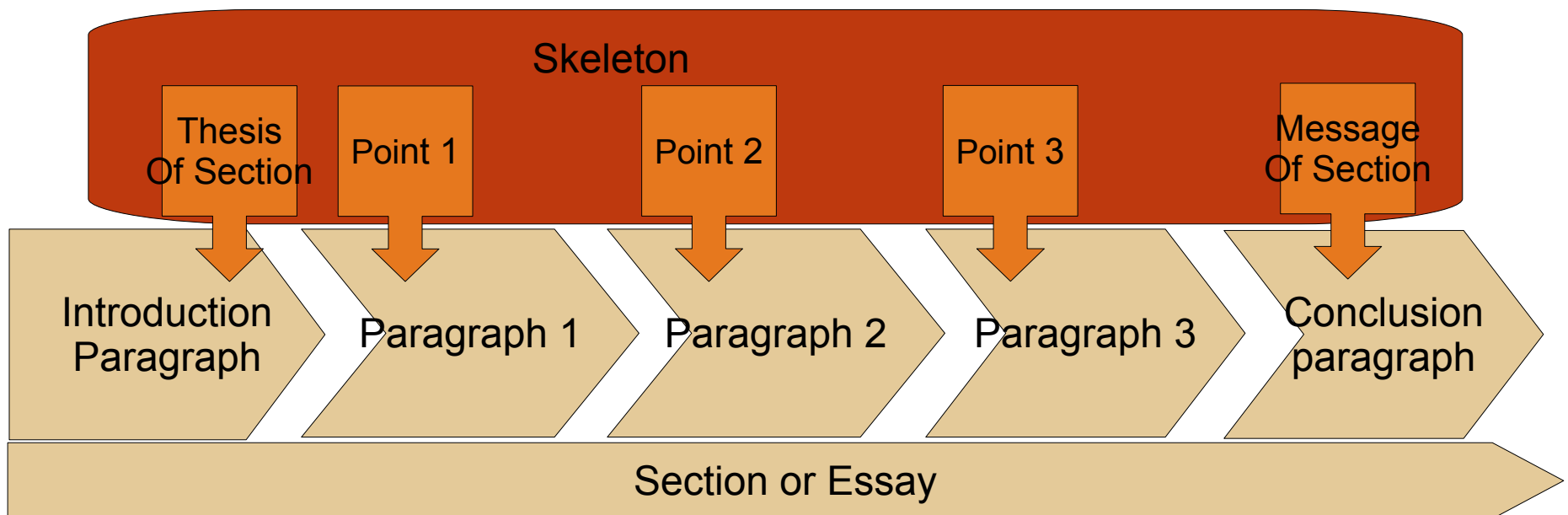# Devlin on The Effect of a Skeleton of Paragraphs

- ▶ [Devlin-Writing]

- ▶ Paragraphs are like **stepping-stones on the bed of a shallow river**, which enable the foot passenger to skip with ease from one to the other until he gets across;

- ▶ but if the stones are placed too far apart in attempting to span the distance one is liable to miss the mark and fall in the water and flounder about until he is again able to get a foothold.

- ▶ 'Tis the same with written language, the reader by means of paragraphs can easily pass from one portion of connected thought to another and keep up his interest in the subject until he gets to the end.

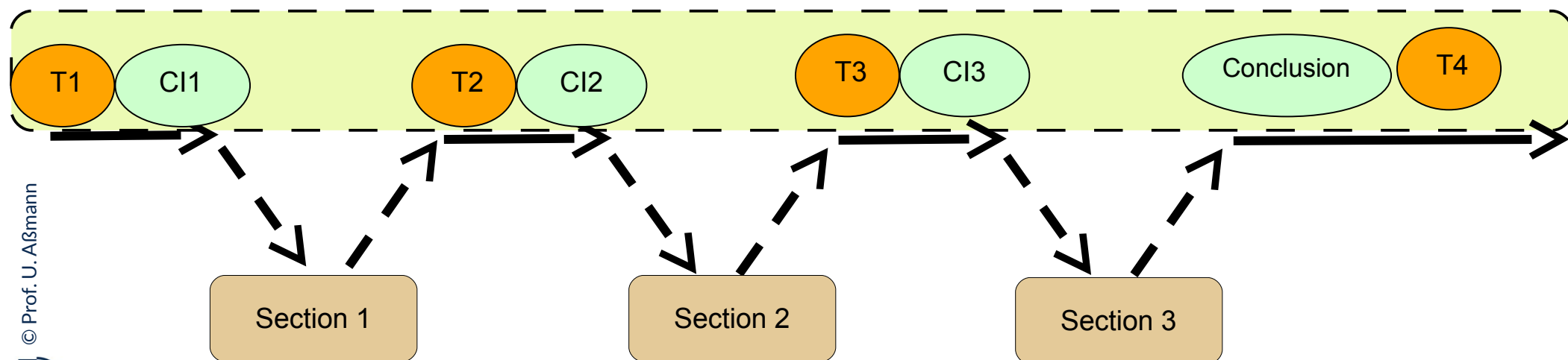# 42.1 Skeletons of Texts and Skeleton Revision

Skeletons

▶ The **skeleton** of a section is the sequence of all points of all paragraphs.

- ▪ The skeleton is an abstraction of the text

▶ If it is marked and extracted from the section, it forms the **skeleton paragraph.**

▶ The skeleton results from Point maturization, Support analysis, and Skeleton maturization

▶ A section (or essay) has **unity** if all points of the paragraphs support its thesis.

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Section Coherence by Grouping the Controlling Ideas

▶ Development schemes can be applied in a paragraph, but also on the section and chapter level. Then, a paper gets a Bush structure (chapter – section – paragraph)

▶ If all paragraphs are direct paragraphs (point first), their controlling ideas can be seen *like a dispersed paragraph (the **section skeleton**)*

  ▪ Devlin: "the stepping stones"

▶ Then, all transition sentences (T) and all controlling ideas (CI) of all paragraphs in a section need to be linked.

  • They need to form a development scheme with Support and Threading relation

    ▪ With ascendance and a conclusion

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Multi-Paragraph Topic (Direct Skeleton)

[Garden Ash, S. 10] What do you recognize?

▶ Das Buch soll als »Geschichte der Gegenwart« verstanden werden. Dementsprechend wurde der Haupttext unmittelbar während oder nach den Ereignissen, die er behandelt, niedergeschrieben. Die Beiträge wurden, um Wiederholungen zu vermeiden, leicht gekürzt, es wurde aber nichts Entscheidendes hinzugefügt oder weggelassen. Die Chronik und einige kurze Skizzen sind später hinzugekommen, ebenso wie mancher Kurzkommentar am Ende eines Beitrags.

▶ Ich möchte noch ein wenig bei dem Begriff »Geschichte der Gegenwart" verweilen. Er stammt nicht von mir. Soweit mir bekannt ist, hat ihn George F. Kennan, amerikanischer Veteran der Diplomatie und Historiker, in einer Rezension meines Buches liber Mitteleuropa der 70ger Jahre, The Use of Adversity (dt. Ein Jahrhundert wird abgewählt), geprägt. Für mich ist dies die beste Charakterisierung dessen, was ich in den vergangenen zwanzig Jahren geschrieben habe, indem ich die Fertigkeiten des Historikers mit denen des Journalisten zu verbinden versuchte.

▶ Doch reizt dieser Begriff auch gleich zur Kontroverse. Geschichte der Gegenwart? Offensichtlich ein Widerspruch in sich. Geschichte hat sich per Definition mit Vergangenem zu beschäftigen. Geschichte - darunter versteht man Bücher über Caesar, den Dreißigjährigen Krieg oder die Russische Revolution.
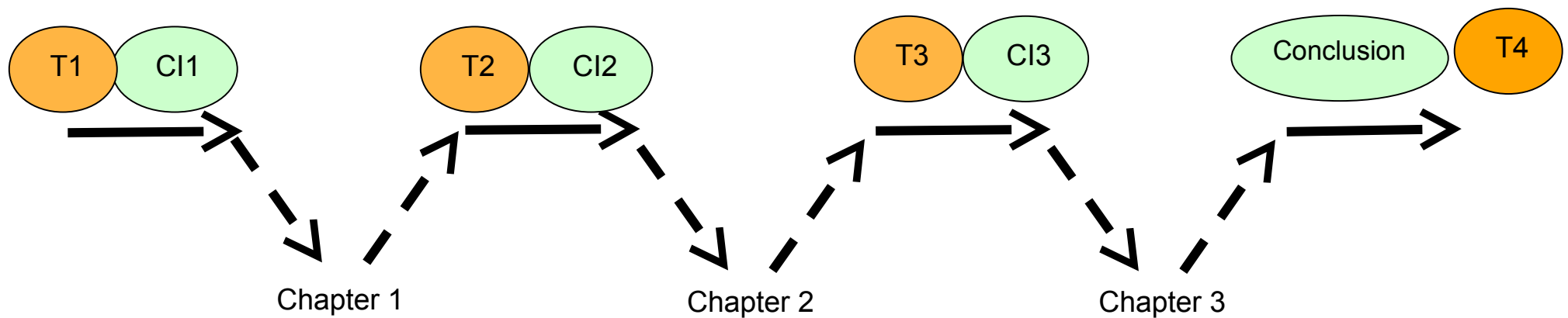
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Multi-Paragraph Topic (Direct Skeleton)

[Cabell] has a wonderful skeleton in his essay.

- <thesis statement of essay>I ASK of literature precisely those things of which I feel the lack in my own life. I appeal for charity, and implore that literature afford me what I cannot come by in myself....

- For I want distinction for that existence which ought to be peculiarly mine, among my innumerable fellows who swarm about earth like ants. Yet which one of us is noticeably, or can be appreciably different, in this throng of human ephemeræ and all their millions and inestimable millions of millions of predecessors and oncoming progeny? ….

- I want my life, the only life of which I am assured, to have symmetry or, in default of that, at least to acquire some clarity. Surely it is not asking very much to wish that my personal conduct be intelligible to me! Yet it is forbidden to know for what purpose this universe was intended, to what end it was set a-going, or why I am here, or even what I had preferably do while here......

- And I want beauty in my life. I have seen beauty in a sunset and in the spring woods and in the eyes of divers women, but now these happy accidents of light and color no longer thrill me. And I want beauty in my life itself, rather than in such chances as befall it. It seems to me that many actions of my life were beautiful, very long ago, when I was young in an evanished world of friendly girls, who were all more lovely than any girl is nowadays. For women now are merely more or less good-looking, and as I know, their looks when at their best have been painstakingly enhanced and edited....

- And I very often wish that I could know the truth about just any one circumstance connected with my life.... Is the phantasmagoria of sound and noise and color really passing or is it all an illusion here in my brain?...

- Then, last of all, I desiderate urbanity. I believe this is the rarest quality in the world. Indeed, it probably does not exist anywhere.
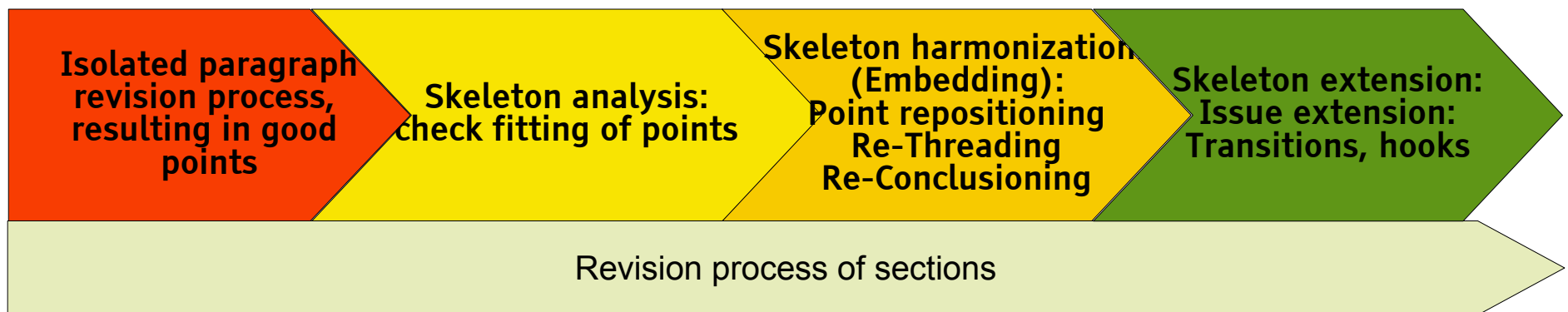
Chapter Coherence

▶ All transition sentences (T) and all controlling ideas (CI) of all chapters need to be linked. They form the **Book Skeleton.**

- They need to form a rhombus (Step-like development scheme) with
  - Support and Threading relation
  - With ascendance and a conclusion

T1 CI1   T2 CI2   T3 CI3   Conclusion T4

Chapter 1   Chapter 2   Chapter 3

Section Maturization Process for Section Unity

▶ The maturity of the skeleton of a section can be red, yellow, green.

  ▪ Isolated paragraph revision results in a *red skeleton*.

▶ **Skeleton analysis** finds out all points and checks whether they fit to each other.

▶ **Skeleton maturization** creates a *yellow skeleton*:

  ▪ increase the embedding of the points (harmonize skeleton)

▶ Skeleton extension finally creates *green skeletons*:

  ▪ write transitions

  ▪ write curiosity hooks

| Isolated paragraph revision process, resulting in good points | Skeleton analysis: check fitting of points | Skeleton harmonization (Embedding): Point repositioning Re-Threading Re-Conclusioning | Skeleton extension: Issue extension: Transitions, hooks |

Revision process of sections

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Different Kinds of Skeletons of Sections

▶ A **direct skeleton** is a sequence of direct paragraphs

▶ An **immediate skeleton** is a sequence of immediate paragraphs

▶ A **smooth skeleton** is a sequence of smooth paragraphs

▶ A **pivot skeleton** has a **pivot paragraph** turning the argumentation

▶ Direct skeletons have the advantage that they let the reader walk from point to point. All points are arguments/supports for the section point.
  ▪ They create interest in the reader because the benefits of the controlling ideas keep the interest alive
  ▪ They create the interest early on in reading, because readers do not have to wait for the points.

Coherence of Sections by Microthreading Paragraphs

- A section is **coherent** if all its paragraphs are linked with the previous.
  - Threading patterns can be used, like climatic importance of the paragraph points
  - Microthreading can be used, like Topic-First or Stress-Last
- Transitional words can be used
  - Conjunctions at the beginning of the paragraph
  - .. But …. However, …. Nevertheless, …
- Vertical links can be used, as within a paragraph
  - Summary links at the beginning of the paragraph
  - Subject links, Q+A links
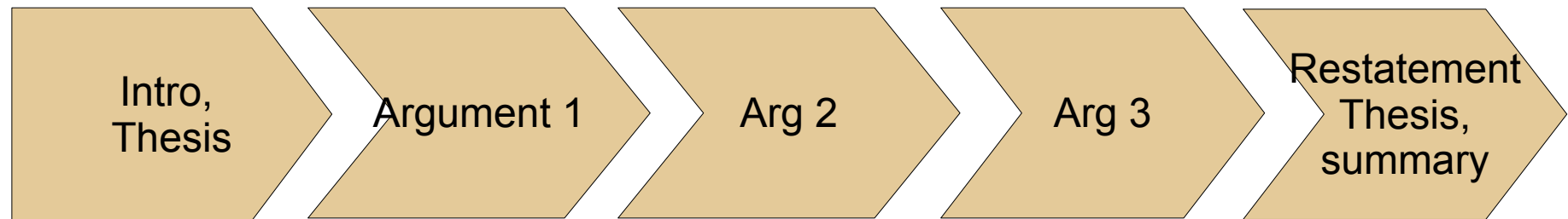- Through a section, multiple thematic strings may run
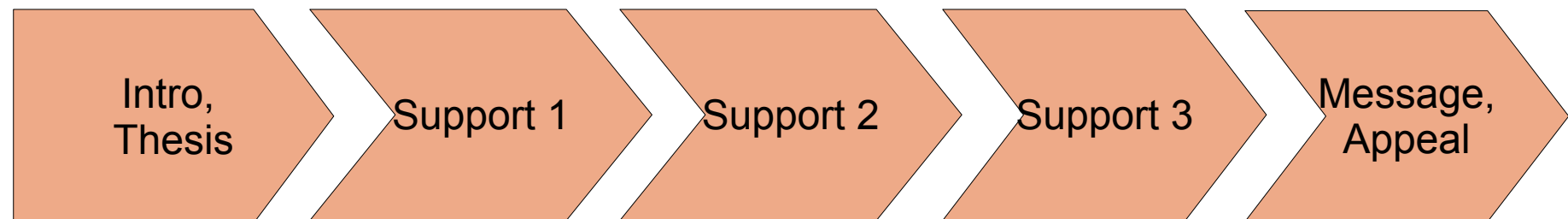
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42.2 Outlining Essays

1-3-1-Essay (Fünfschritt, Direct Essay)

▶ The structures of paragraphs can be transferred to essays

▶ The standard English essay is a *direct wrapped essay with repetition of the thesis* [Franklin-Parks]

▶ Its structure is a **rhombus** (5-chain, Fünfschritt), flat or deep (comb or bush)

„echo" essay

Intro, Thesis	Argument 1	Arg 2	Arg 3	Restatement Thesis, summary

„message" essay (upward essay)

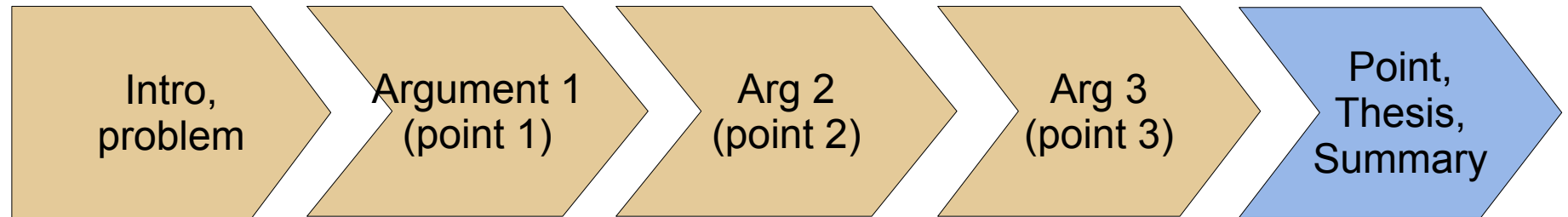| Intro, Thesis	Support 1	Support 2	Support 3	Message, Appeal

Cabell's "Beyond Life"

▶ Read [Cabell-BeyondLife], a typical English-American Essay with 1-n-1 structure.

▶ Where is the skeleton? Can you identify the stepping stones, i.e., the points of the paragraphs of the discussion of the essay?

▶ What is the message of the essay?

▶ With which thesis does it start?

▶ Is this an echo essay or a message essay?

Suspended Essay

▶ The suspended essay has the point at the end

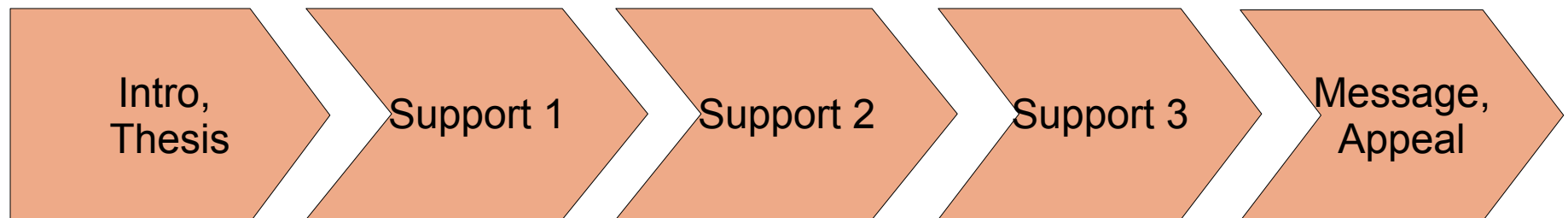| Intro, problem	Argument 1 (point 1)	Arg 2 (point 2)	Arg 3 (point 3)	Point, Thesis, Summary

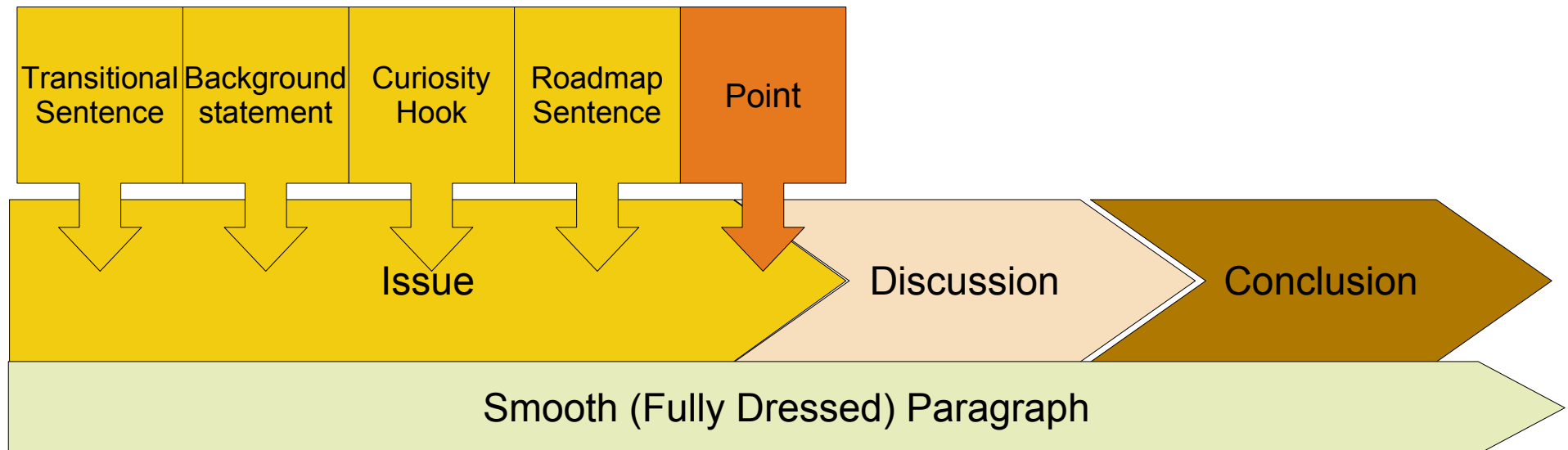▶ Read [Russel-Worship]. Why is it a suspended essay?

1.-3-1 Elevator Pitches

- A **1-3-1 Elevator Pitch** is what you can tell your CEO if you use accidentally the same elevator

- [Thiele-Argumentation] uses an upward 5-step rhombus for ad-hoc statements.

- The 5-step should end with an appeal, because a pitch or statement must appeal to the audience

strong „message" structure

Intro, Thesis	Support 1	Support 2	Support 3	Message, Appeal

Repet.: Issue, Discussion, and Conclusion

- ▶ The **issue** is the introduction of the paragraph [WiCo], an interface to the previous paragraph
  - ▪ If the issue only contains the thesis statement, the paragraph is called a **direct paragraph**
- ▶ Otherwise, the issue may contain:
  - – At the beginning of the issue: **Transitional sentence** or link to the previous
  - – **Background statement,** Setting the scene or funnel introduction
  - – **Curiosity hook,** a hook sentence attracting the reader
  - – A **roadmap** to the discussion, indicating a decompostion scheme
  - – At the end of the issue: Point with Controlling idea and a Controller
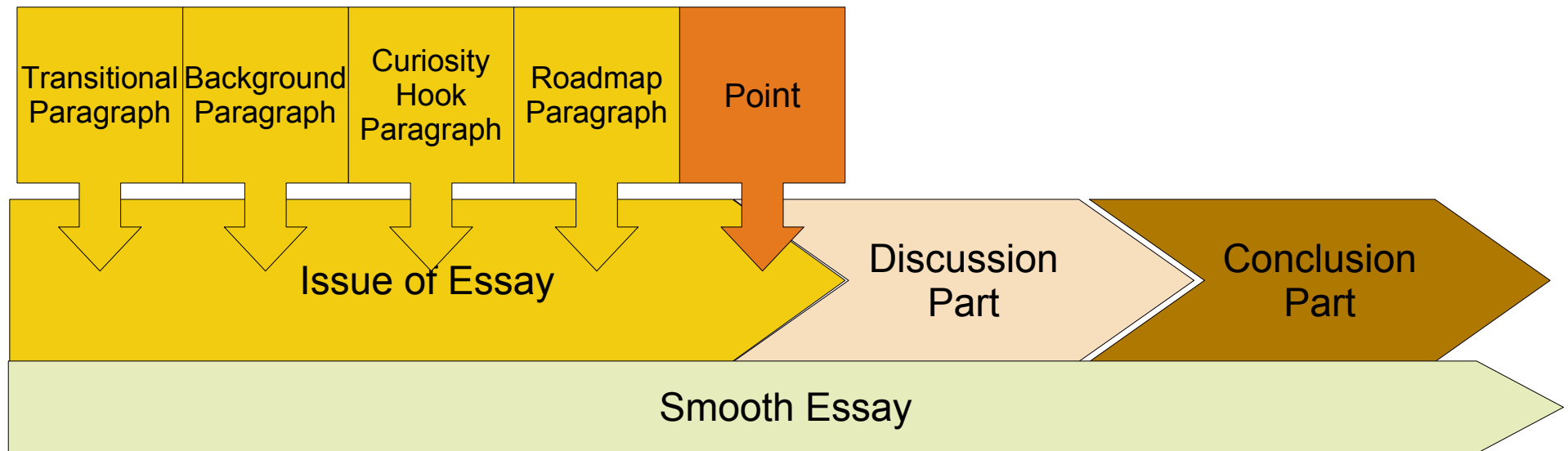- ▶ Such a paragraph is called **smoothly dressed**

42.3 Smooth Essays

Issues in Smooth Essays

▶ The terminology of paragraphs can be transferred to essays

▶ Issues occur also in Smooth essays

 ▪ They are divided into paragraphs (instead of sentences)

▶ The thesis is most often the last sentence of the last paragraph of the essay issue; after it follows the discussion.

Example: Bed Books and Night Lamps

▶ Read [Tomlinson-BedBooks]

▶ Identify how long the introduction is – isn't it a smooth paragraph?

▶ What is the hook?

▶ Is there a funnel introduction?

▶ Where is the thesis statement?

Excercise: Bush

▶ Read the introduction of Vannevar Bush. Science – the endless frontier

▶ http://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/nsf50/vbush1945.htm

▶ Why is the introduction structured as an 1-3-1 essay?

▶ What is the thesis? What are his arguments?

▶ Why is this powerful, albeit very simple?

▶ How would you write a recommendation to the government, what to do?

Exam Questions

▶ Explain the structure of the 1-3-1 essay (5-step essay).

▶ What is a skeleton of a text?

▶ Explain the process of skeleton revision.

The End

▶ Explain, why 1-3-1 structure should not only be in paragraphs, but also in sections, chapters, and books.

▶ Why is it good to alternate between direct, suspended, and pivot structure when writing a long book?

▶ What would you prefer for the introduction of a paper: a direct or suspended section? Compare advantages and disadvantages.