# 41. Structuring Sections and Essays
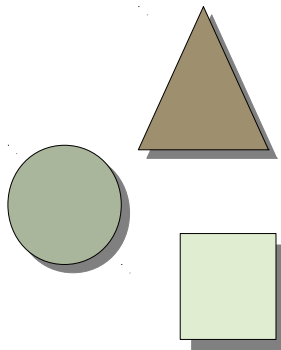
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2013-1.0, 13-12-17
http://st.inf.tu-dresden.de/acse

1) Skeletons
2) Outlining 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.

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# 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

# Literatur

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

# Literature

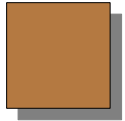Academic Skills for Computer Scientists, © Prof. Uwe Aßmann

# Gutenberg.org References

6

► [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/

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▶ [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.

# 41.1 Skeletons of Texts and Skeleton Revision
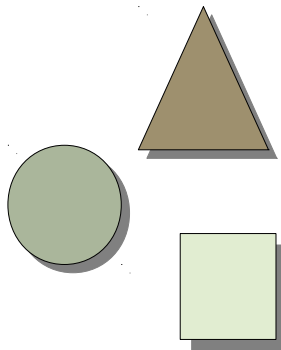
# Skeletons

- 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.
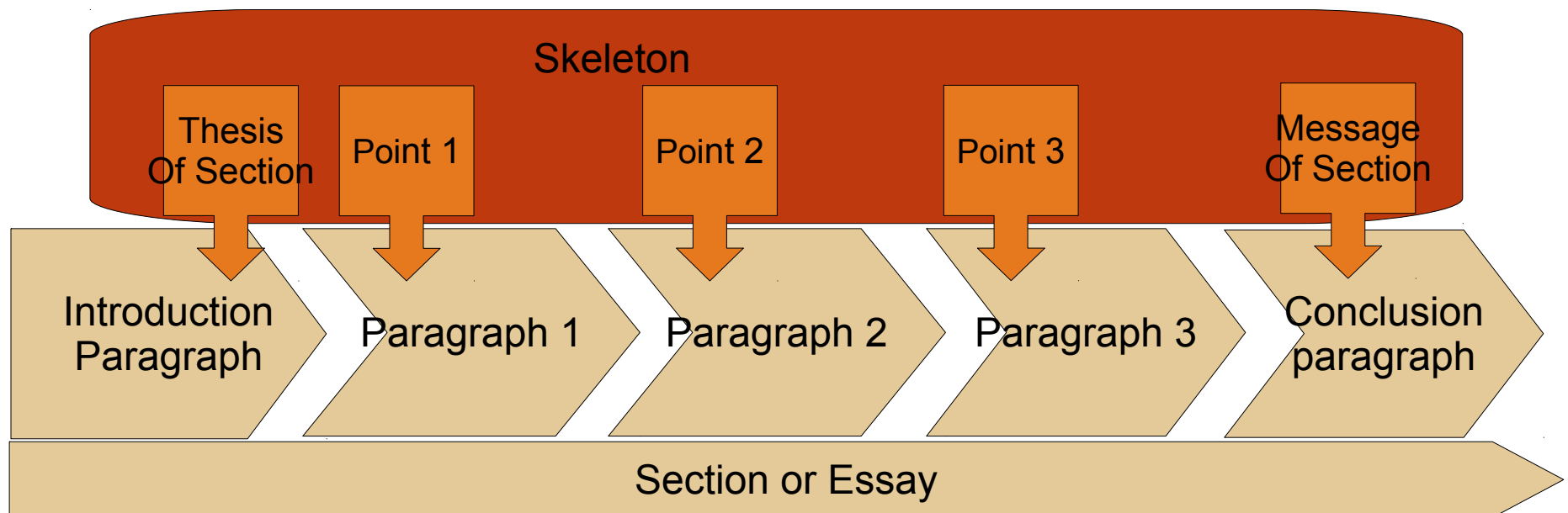
# Section Coherence by Grouping the Controlling Ideas

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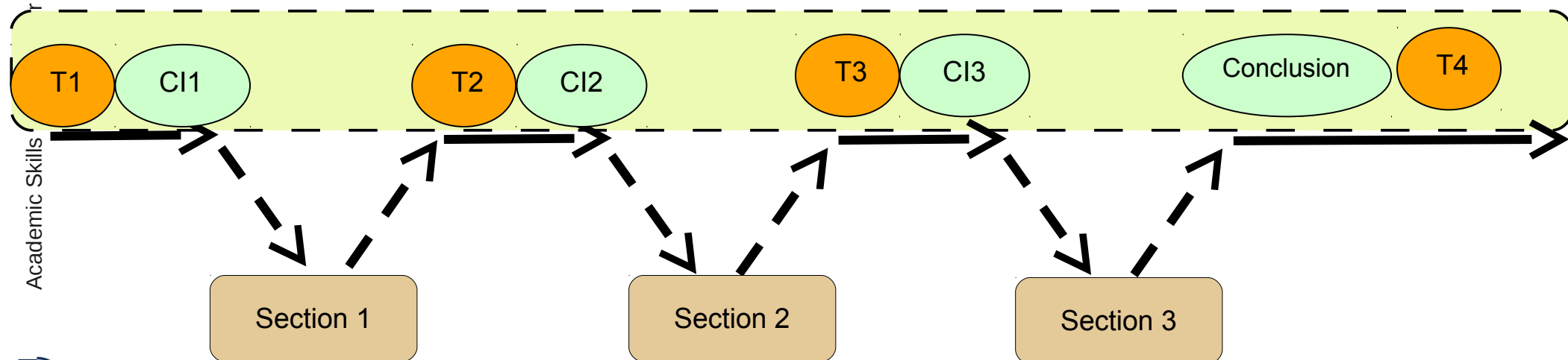
[Garden Ash, S. 10] What do you recognize?

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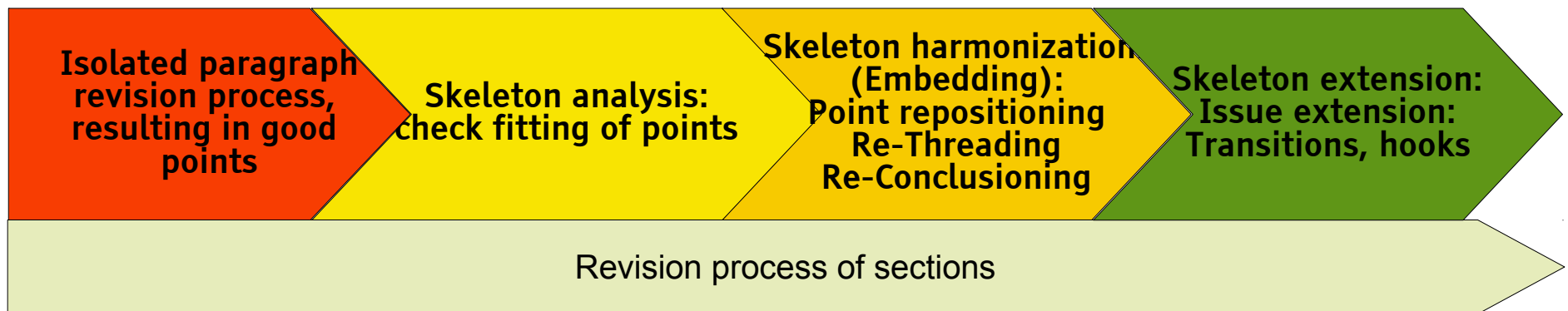
▶ All transition sentences (T) and all controlling ideas (CI) of all chapters need to be linked. They form the **Book Skeleton.**

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

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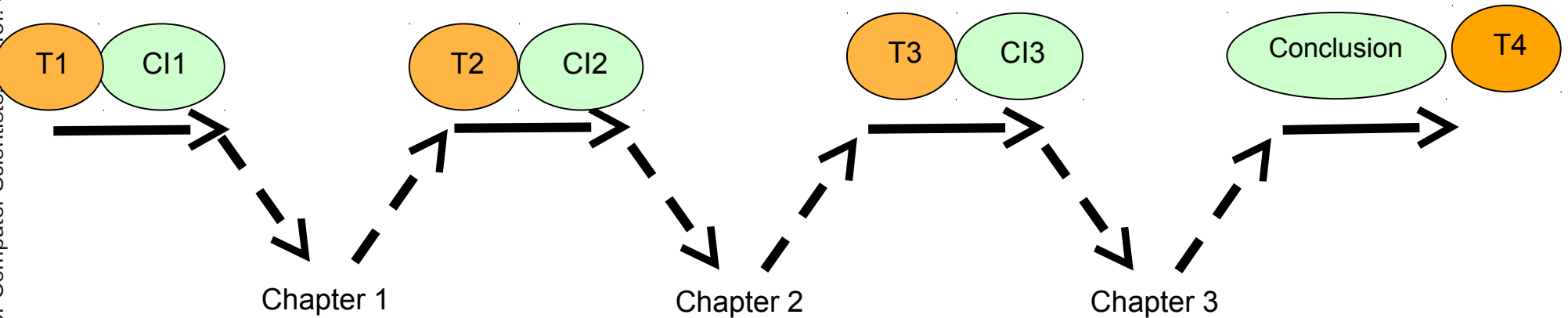
▶ The maturity of the skeleton of a section can be red, yellow, green.

  ▪ 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

# 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

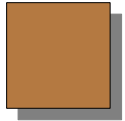► A **pivot skeleton** has a **pivot paragraph** turning the argumentation

► 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
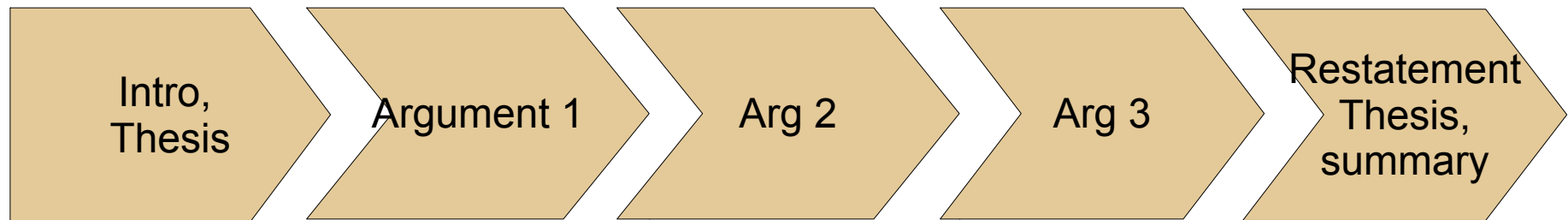
# 41.2 Outlining Essays
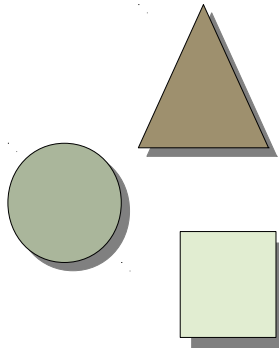
# 1-3-1-Essay (Fünfschritt, Direct Essay)
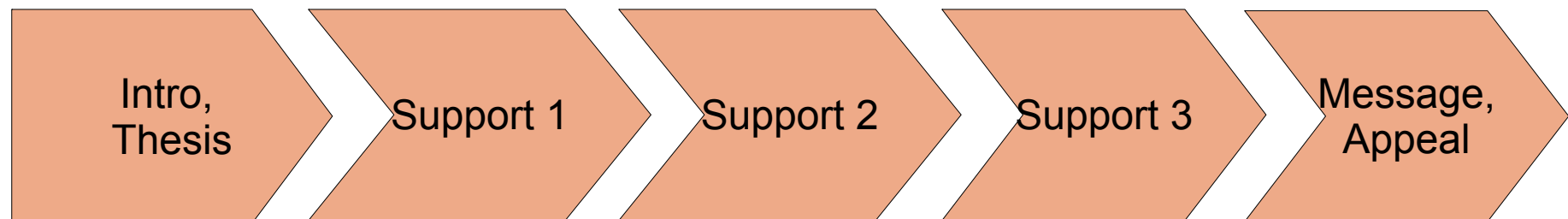
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▶ The structures of paragraphs can be transferred to essays

▶ 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)

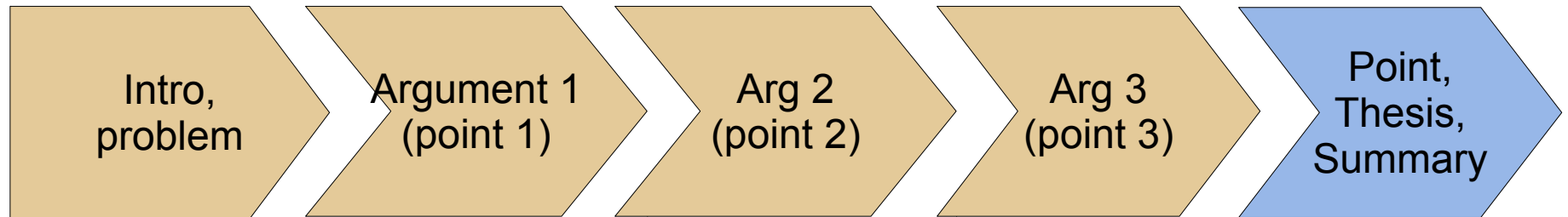| Intro, Thesis | Support 1 | Support 2 | Support 3 | Message, Appeal |
|---|---|---|---|---|

# 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?

# Elevator Pitches and Statements

▶ An **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.

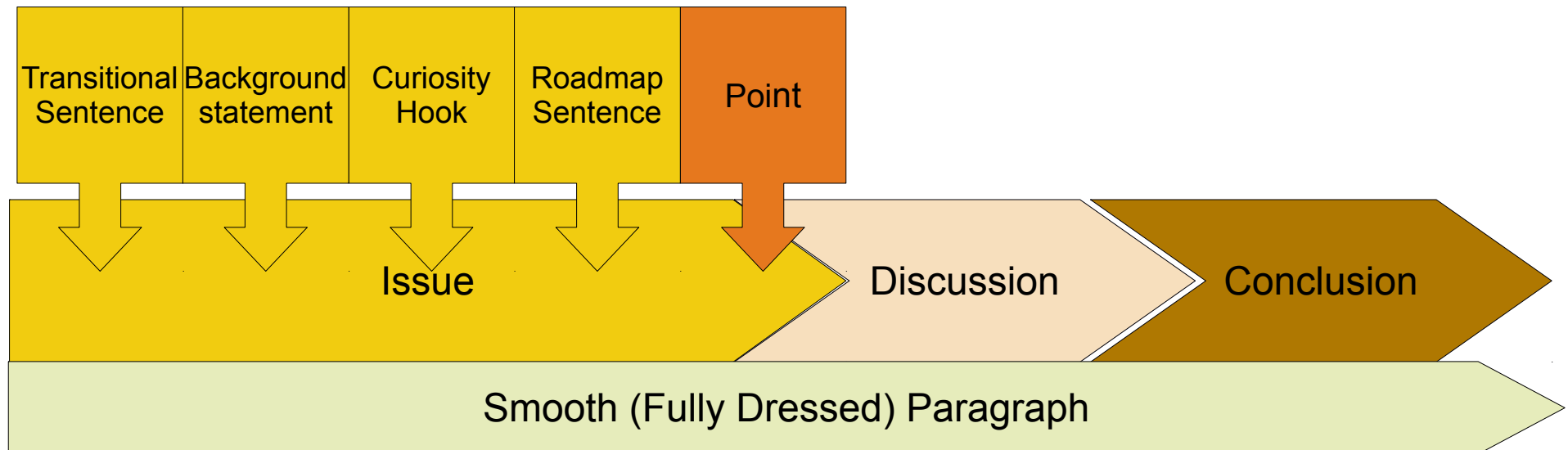▶ The 5-step should end with an appeal, because a pitch or statement must appeal to the audience
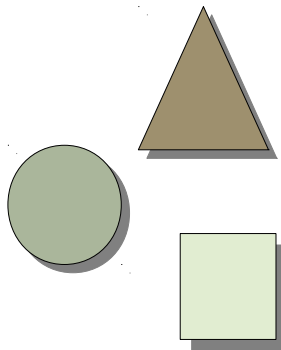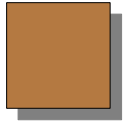
strong „message" structure

Intro, Thesis → Support 1 → Support 2 → Support 3 → Message, Appeal
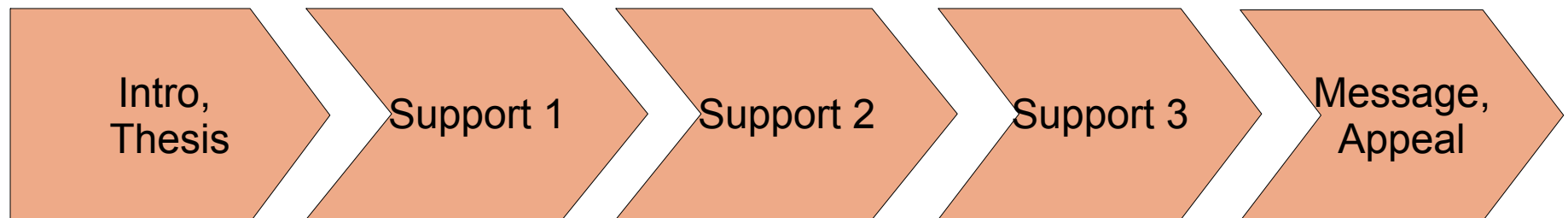
► The **issue** is the introduction of the paragraph [WiCo], an interface to the previous paragraph

- 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**

| Transitional Sentence | Background statement | Curiosity Hook | Roadmap Sentence | Point |
|---|---|---|---|---|

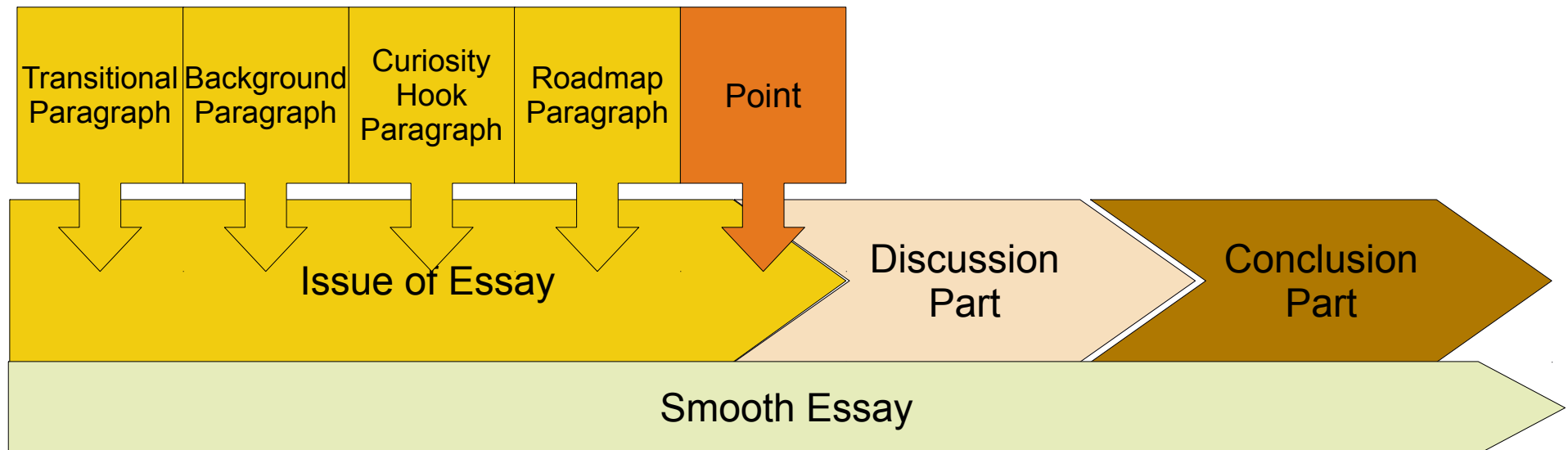Issue  Discussion  Conclusion

Smooth (Fully Dressed) Paragraph

# 41.2 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.

| Transitional Paragraph | Background Paragraph | Curiosity Hook Paragraph | Roadmap Paragraph | Point |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Issue of Essay    Discussion Part    Conclusion Part

Smooth Essay

# 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?

# The End

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