

ENGL210/CA - WEEK 2 - DAY 1

INTRODUCTION TO ESSAY WRITING

THE INFORMATION

- ▶ **Course Code: ENGL210**
- ▶ **Section: CA**
- ▶ **Title: Introduction to Essay Writing**
- ▶ **Professor: Zachary Abram**
- ▶ **When: Tuesdays/Thursdays 3:30 – 6:00pm**
- ▶ **Where: H 427**

THE INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Zachary Abram

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Office hours:

Mon–Thurs 2:30–3:30pm

Office: LB665



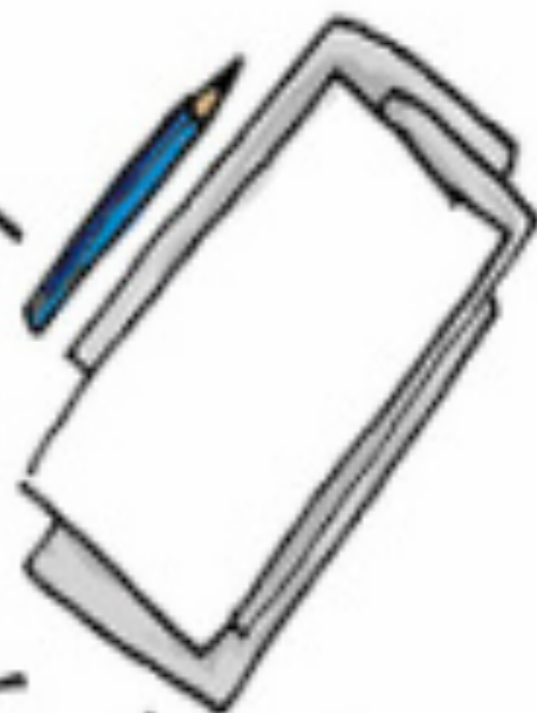
LET'S TALK
WRITING!



The eternal struggle.



getting stuff
from here



To here.



ΚΑΛΙΟΠΗ

ΚΛΕΪΩ ΕΡΑΤΩ

ΜΕΛΠΟΜΕΝΗ ΤΕΡΨΙΧΟΡΗ

ΤΟΝΥΥΙΑ ΕΝΤΕΡΠΕΙ

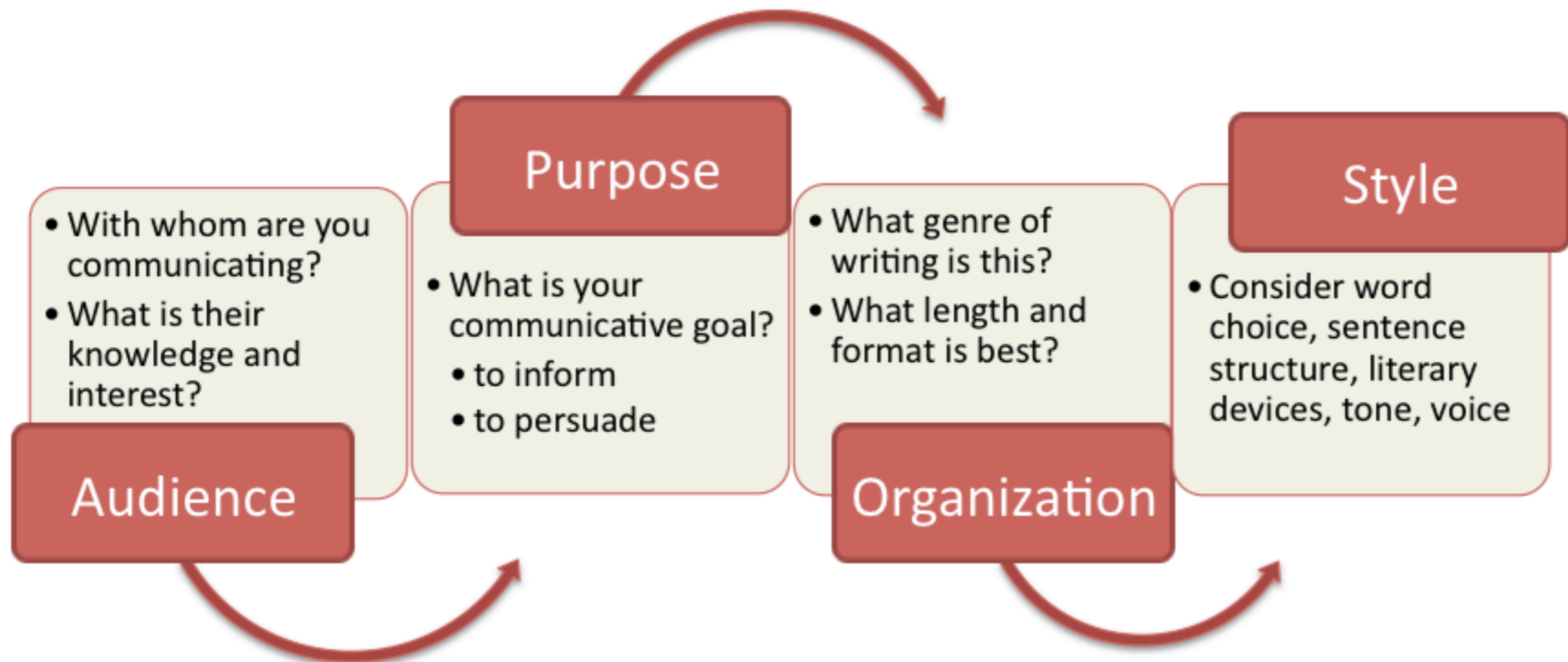
ΦΑΛΕΙΑ ΟΥΡΑΝΙΑ

The myth stems from the belief that writing is some mystical process. That it's magical. That it abides by its own set of rules different from all other forms of work, art, or play. But that's bullshit. Plumbers don't get plumber's block. Teachers don't get teacher's block.

Soccer players don't get soccer block. What makes writing different? Nothing. The only difference is that writers feel they have a free pass to give up when writing is hard.

Patrick Rothfuss

Writing considerations



Audience

Expert
Manager
Technician
Layperson

Purpose

Informative
Persuasive
(Entertaining)

Writing

Organization

Rhetorical Patterns
Paragraphing
Transitional Devices

Style (How vs. What)

Level of Formality
Tone and Diction
Variety and Emphasis
Citation
Formatting and Presentation

HIGH SCHOOL VS. UNIVERSITY

**Most notable change
when writing at the
university level versus
high school?**

HIGH SCHOOL VS. UNIVERSITY

Most notable change when writing at the university level versus high school: purpose of writing

High school writing: Knowledge Telling
University writing: Knowledge Making

HIGH SCHOOL: KNOWLEDGE TELLING

Papers typically

- **demonstrate the accumulation of acquired knowledge**
- **are directed at the teacher as the primary audience**
- **incorporate direct quotation and paraphrase**
- **include simple argumentation and some analysis**
- **reduce issues/topics to simplest denominators**
- **tend towards comprehensive, yet broad, reports**

UNIVERSITY: KNOWLEDGE MAKING

Papers typically

- enter an existing conversation
- are aimed at peers in the field
- use summary and synthesis
- use sound argumentation and thorough analysis
- follow disciplinary conventions precisely
- introduce new knowledge and offer meta-commentary that positions the writer as a scholar/professional peer

YOU COME LATE. WHEN YOU ARRIVE, OTHERS HAVE LONG PRECEDED YOU, AND THEY ARE ENGAGED IN A HEATED DISCUSSION, A DISCUSSION TOO HEATED FOR THEM TO PAUSE AND TELL YOU EXACTLY WHAT IT IS ABOUT... YOU LISTEN FOR A WHILE, UNTIL YOU DECIDE YOU HAVE CAUGHT THE TENOR OF THE ARGUMENT; THEN YOU PUT IN YOUR OAR. SOMEONE ANSWERS; YOU ANSWER HIM; ANOTHER COMES TO YOUR DEFENSE; ANOTHER ALIGNS HIMSELF AGAINST YOU... THE HOUR GROWS LATE, YOU MUST DEPART. AND YOU DO DEPART, WITH THE DISCUSSION STILL VIGOROUSLY IN PROGRESS.

Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form

THE TROUBLE WITH TEACHING WRITING

**“People think that I
can teach them style.
What stuff it all is!
Have something to
say, and say it as
clearly as you can.
That is the only
secret of style.”**

~ Matthew Arnold



A GOOD ESSAY

“A good essay must have this permanent quality about it; it must draw its curtain round us, but it must be a curtain that shuts us in not out.”

~ Virginia Woolf

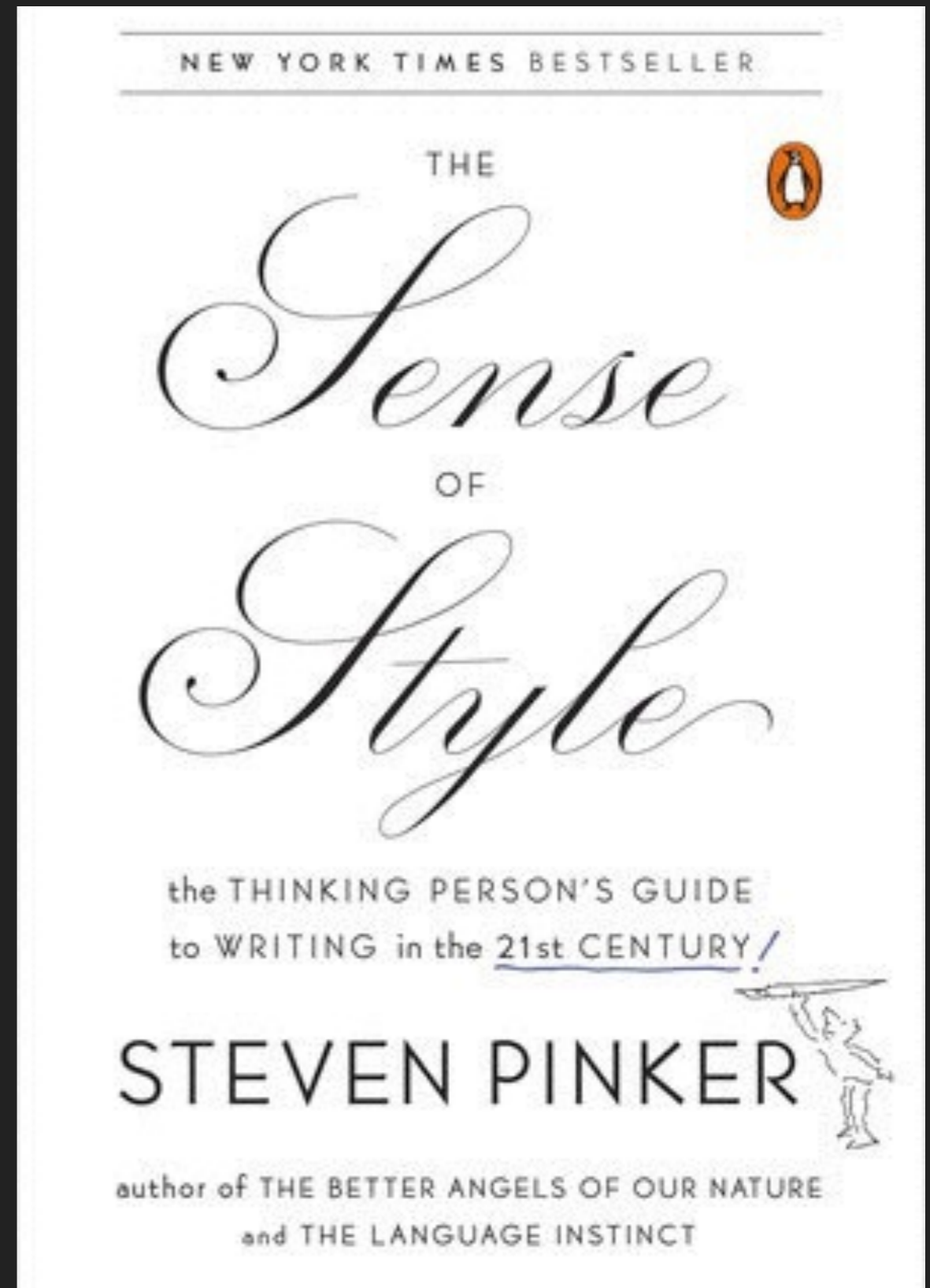


STEPHEN PINKER – THE BLANK SLATE



PINKER

“[Grammar rules]...
serve as a tactic for
one upmanship.
They’re a way in
which one person can
prove that they are
more sophisticated or
literate than someone
else.”



SOUNDING SMART

- ▶ Writing is more than a series of rhetorical moves.

using big words to sound smart...

i mean

utilizing gargantuan idioms to fabricate intelligence.

THE MOVE FROM A STRUCTURALIST ACCOUNT IN WHICH CAPITAL IS UNDERSTOOD TO STRUCTURE SOCIAL RELATIONS IN RELATIVELY HOMOLOGOUS WAYS TO A VIEW OF HEGEMONY IN WHICH POWER RELATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO REPETITION, CONVERGENCE, AND REARTICULATION BROUGHT THE QUESTION OF TEMPORALITY INTO THE THINKING OF STRUCTURE, AND MARKED A SHIFT FROM A FORM OF ALTHUSSERIAN THEORY THAT TAKES STRUCTURAL TOTALITIES AS THEORETICAL OBJECTS TO ONE IN WHICH THE INSIGHTS INTO THE CONTINGENT POSSIBILITY OF STRUCTURE INAUGURATE A RENEWED CONCEPTION OF HEGEMONY AS BOUND UP WITH THE CONTINGENT SITES AND STRATEGIES OF THE REARTICULATION OF POWER.

Judith Butler



WHAT WOULD

HST DO?

TO JACK SCOTT, VANCOUVER SUN

October 1, 1958 57 Perry Street New York City

Sir,

I got a hell of a kick reading the piece Time magazine did this week on The Sun. In addition to wishing you the best of luck, I'd also like to offer my services.

Since I haven't seen a copy of the "new" Sun yet, I'll have to make this a tentative offer. I stepped into a dung-hole the last time I took a job with a paper I didn't know anything about (see enclosed clippings) and I'm not quite ready to go charging up another blind alley.

By the time you get this letter, I'll have gotten hold of some of the recent issues of The Sun. Unless it looks totally worthless, I'll let my offer stand. And don't think that my arrogance is unintentional: it's just that I'd rather offend you now than after I started working for you.

I didn't make myself clear to the last man I worked for until after I took the job. It was as if the Marquis de Sade had suddenly found himself working for Billy Graham. The man despised me, of course, and I had nothing but contempt for him and everything he stood for. If you asked him, he'd tell you that I'm "not very likable, (that I) hate people, (that I) just want to be left alone, and (that I) feel too superior to mingle with the average person." (That's a direct quote from a memo he sent to the publisher.)

Nothing beats having good references.



**THE LIMITS OF MY
LANGUAGE MEANS
THE LIMITS OF MY
WORLD**

Ludwig Wittgenstein



WHAT IS A SENTENCE?

U E P I W W Y R E

WHAT IS A SENTENCE?

A sentence is a word or group of words that express a complete thought or idea:

Subject + Verb + Object

WHAT IS A SENTENCE?

A sentence needs a **subject**

(person or thing doing an action)

And a **predicate** (a verb or a couple of verbs) that states the action

SUBJET + {PREDICATE}

Judy {runs}.

Judy and her dog {run on the beach every morning}.



PARTS OF SPEECH

Ph



“I would argue that the paragraph, not the sentence, is the basic unit of writing—the place where coherence begins and words stand a chance of becoming more than mere words.”

Stephen King



**WHAT MAKES
A GOOD
PARAGRAPH?**

A GOOD PARAGRAPH

- ▶ **Unity/Coherence**
- ▶ **A Topic Sentence**
- ▶ **Adequate Development**

EACH PARAGRAPH SHOULD

- ▶ contain ONE new point in your overall thesis
- ▶ be able to stand on its own and have its own internal structure
- ▶ state its purpose early on, in the form of a topic sentence

WHAT MAKES FOR A GOOD

TOPIC SENTENCE?

TOPIC SENTENCES

- ▶ Every topic sentence will have two things: a **topic** and a **controlling idea**.

EXAMPLES

Topic Sentence: There are many reasons why pollution in ABC Town is the worst in the world.

The topic is “pollution in ABC Town is the worst in the world” and the controlling idea is “many reasons.”

Topic Sentence: To be an effective CEO requires certain characteristics.

The topic is “To be an effective CEO” and the controlling idea is certain characteristics.

**HOW LONG SHOULD
A PARAGRAPH BE?**

**WHEN DO YOU START
A NEW PARAGRAPH?**



WRITING STRATEGIES:

**GENERAL-
SPECIFIC**

Example annotation:

General
claim:
fact

Effective scholarly writing focuses reader attention on a research topic.

One key method of establishing this focus is a general-specific rhetorical

pattern. This pattern typically begins with a broad general claim,

progresses through a series of steps that narrow the topic, and

ultimately lands on a specific topic of interest. By carrying the reader

through these steps, the general-specific pattern effectively introduces

a topic and makes clear how it relates to a broader context. In many

instances, the general-specific pattern ends with a broader statement,

which adds complexity and further contextualizes the specific claim.

Specific
topic of
interest

(Starting Point)
General statement

Elaboration on statement

More detailed elaboration
(Landing Point)

**Broader statement:
complexity / significance**

Stacking
Pattern:
General Specific

(Starting Point)
General statement

Elaboration on statement

More detailed elaboration
(Landing Point)

General-Specific Texts

General statement



Elaboration on the
statement



More detailed
elaboration

Broader Statement



**GENERAL-SPECIFIC
EXAMPLE**

AVOIDING MONOTONY

- ▶ While you generally want to move from the known to the new, from the thesis to its illustration or restriction, you sometimes want to violate this pattern. Educated readers in particular can be bored by texts that always present information in the same way.
- ▶ The general to specific rhetorical strategy can be too rigid and structured, too predictable.
- ▶ Simply reversing the process can fix this problem.



SPECIFIC-GENERAL
EXAMPLE

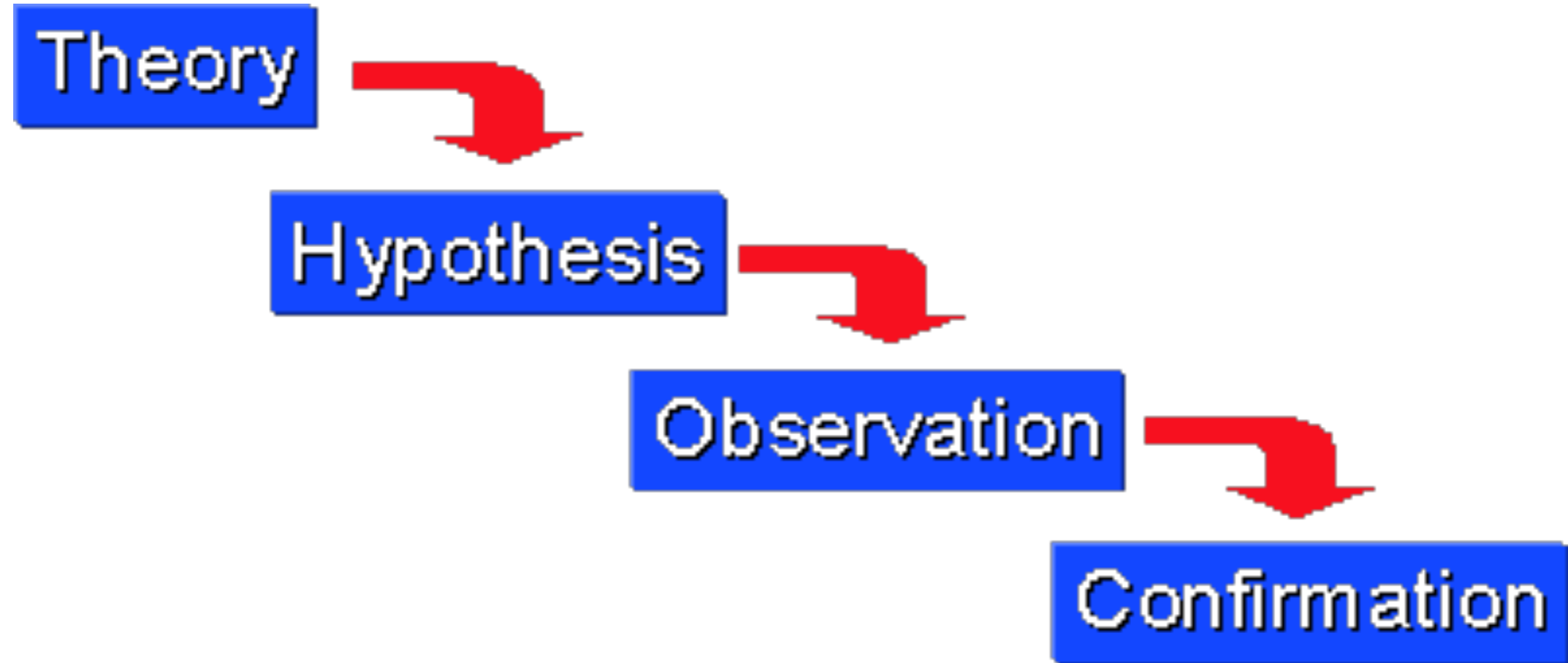
SPECIFIC GENERAL

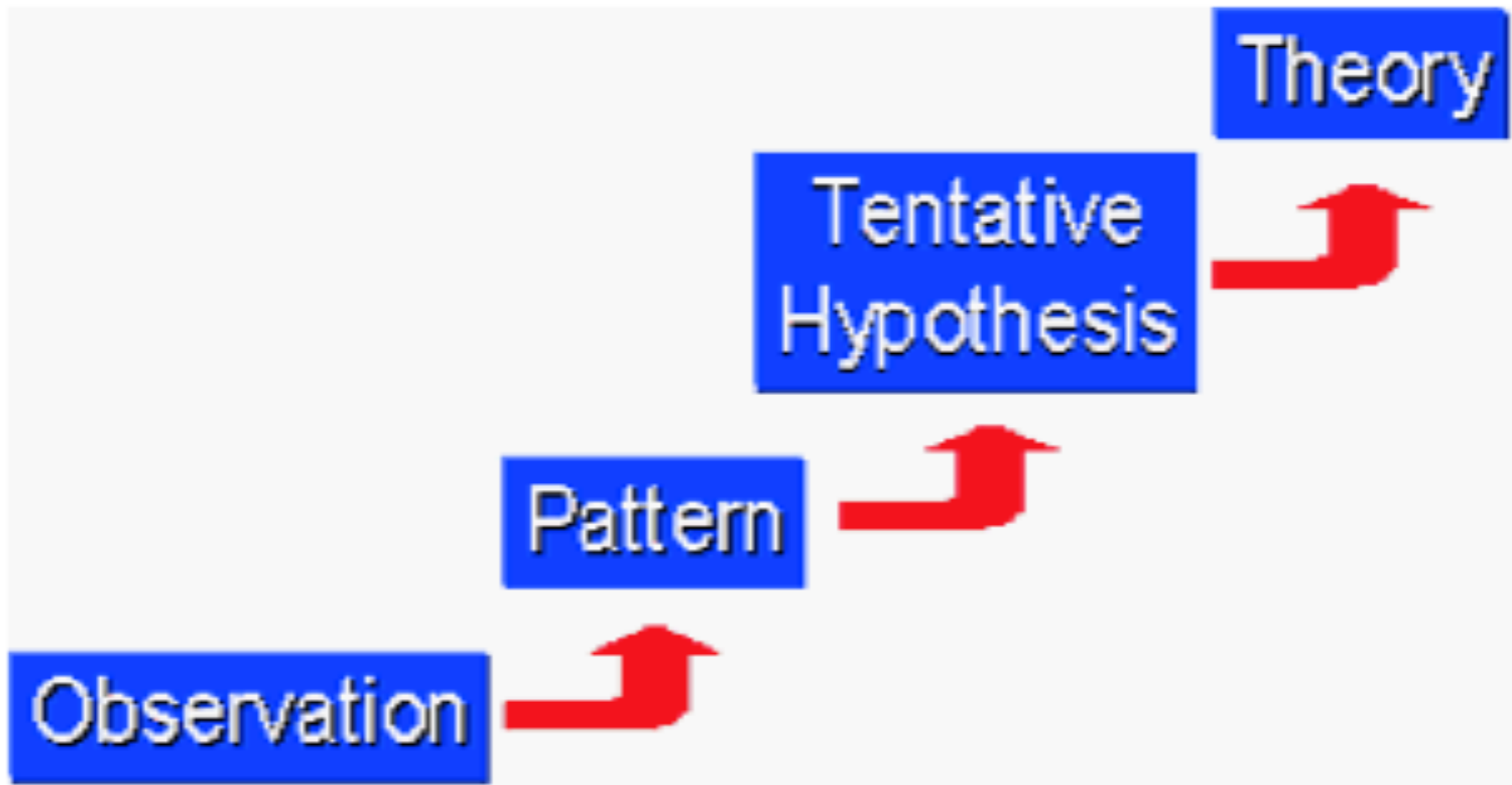
- ▶ **This pattern is as compelling as the general-to-specific pattern. As you lead the reader through your thinking, you can build some suspense before your concluding statement. Writers often use this pattern when they want to persuade their audience about their generalization or conclusion and when they aren't sure about their audience's attitude toward their conclusions.**

DEDUCTIVE VS. INDUCTIVE REASONING

- ▶ Deductive reasoning starts with a general theory, statement, or hypothesis and then works its way down to a conclusion based on evidence.
- ▶ Inductive reasoning starts with a small observation or question and works its way to a theory by examining the related issues.









IN-CLASS WRITING:

PARAGRAPH #1

PARAGRAPH EXERCISE #1

- ▶ In a well-developed paragraph of approximately 100 words, please respond to one of these prompts:
- ▶ In what ways is your hometown different from Montreal?
- ▶ What's the worst thing about the internet?

FOR NEXT CLASS:

Along These Lines, Chapter 3: Illustration
Along These Lines, Chapter 14 + 15

