

# Metastatements

# Two kinds of Writing

- Macrowriting
  - The overall writing of the essay
  - Issues of organization, macroargument, goals for the essay
  - Seeing the forest rather than the trees
- Microwriting
  - At the level of the sentence and the paragraph
  - Issues of microargument, style, grammar, etc.
  - Examining the trees individually

These involve distinct consciousnesses

# Essays have two kinds of statements

- Substantive statements
  - About the subject matter of the essay
  - Convey the meaning or create the meaning of the essay in the reader
  - Make the claims; provide the support
- Metastatements
  - Literally: statements about statements
  - Road maps that tell the reader how to read the essay

Intertwined to guide reader through substance

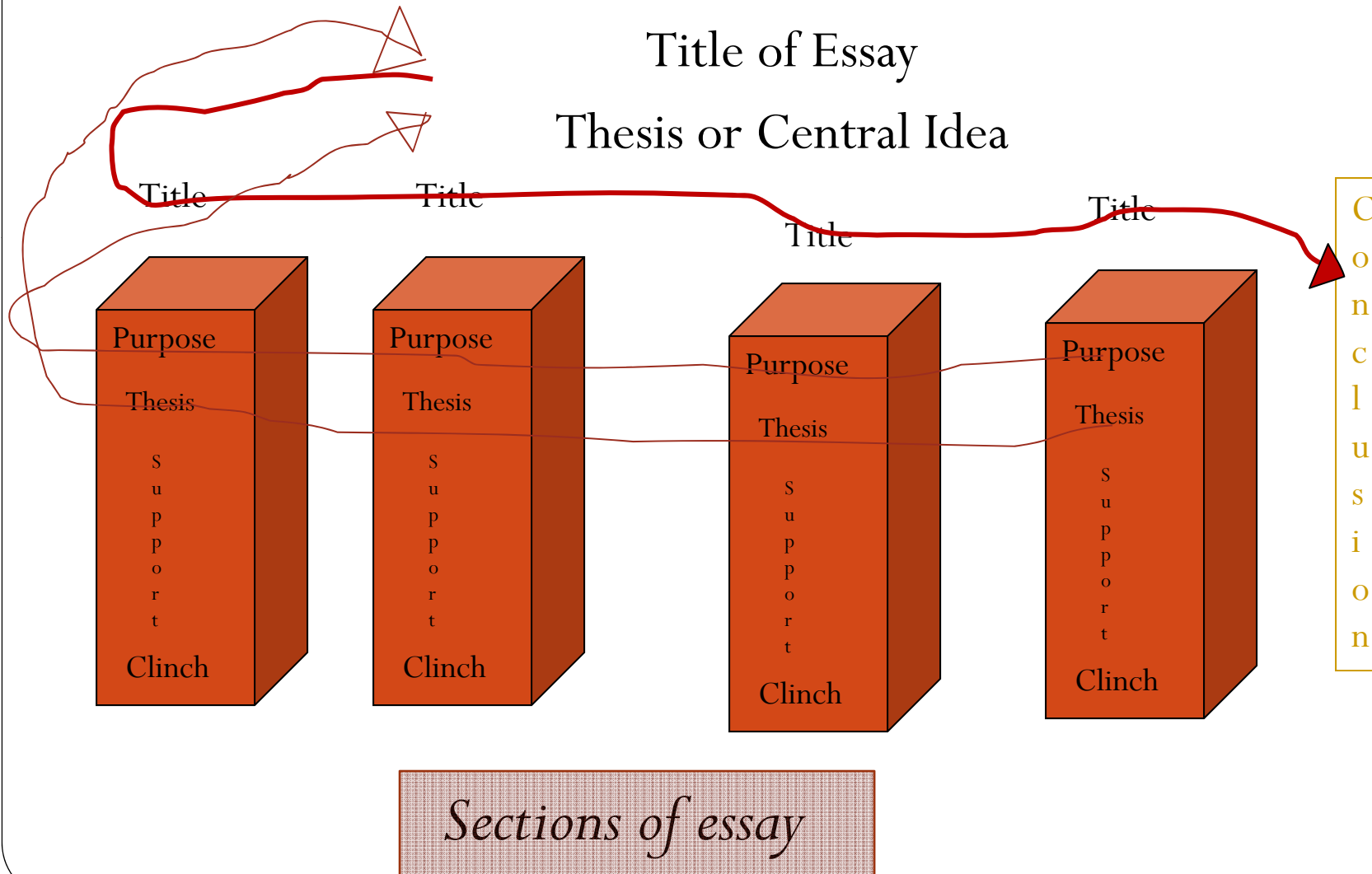
# Metastatements: Functions

- Thesis
  - Focuses the reader's attention
  - Defines the endpoint of the reading
  - Manages criterion for judging the essay
- Statement of purpose
  - Why is this unit here?
- Transition
  - Summary/Forecast
  - Relational orientation; movement
- Clinch (at end of unit)
  - Complete the loop back to thesis

# Writing Units

- An essay contains layers of units
  - The essay as a whole is a unit
  - Each section of the essay is a unit
  - Each subsection (if it has them) is a unit
- Units all have same structure
  - Title
  - Purpose function
  - Thesis
  - Support
  - Clinch

# The Essay & its sections



# Metastatements of Essay

- Title of Essay
  - Communicates focus of project
  - Stimulates interest
- Introduction
  - Thesis
    - At end of introduction
  - Purpose
    - Revealed by end of introduction
  - Forecast
    - Optional but can provide road map
- Section development
  - Titles should read in sequence to conclusion
  - Purpose relates section to purpose of essay and thesis
  - Clinch summarizes where you are along path to conclusion
- Conclusion
  - Clinch of essay

# Thesis

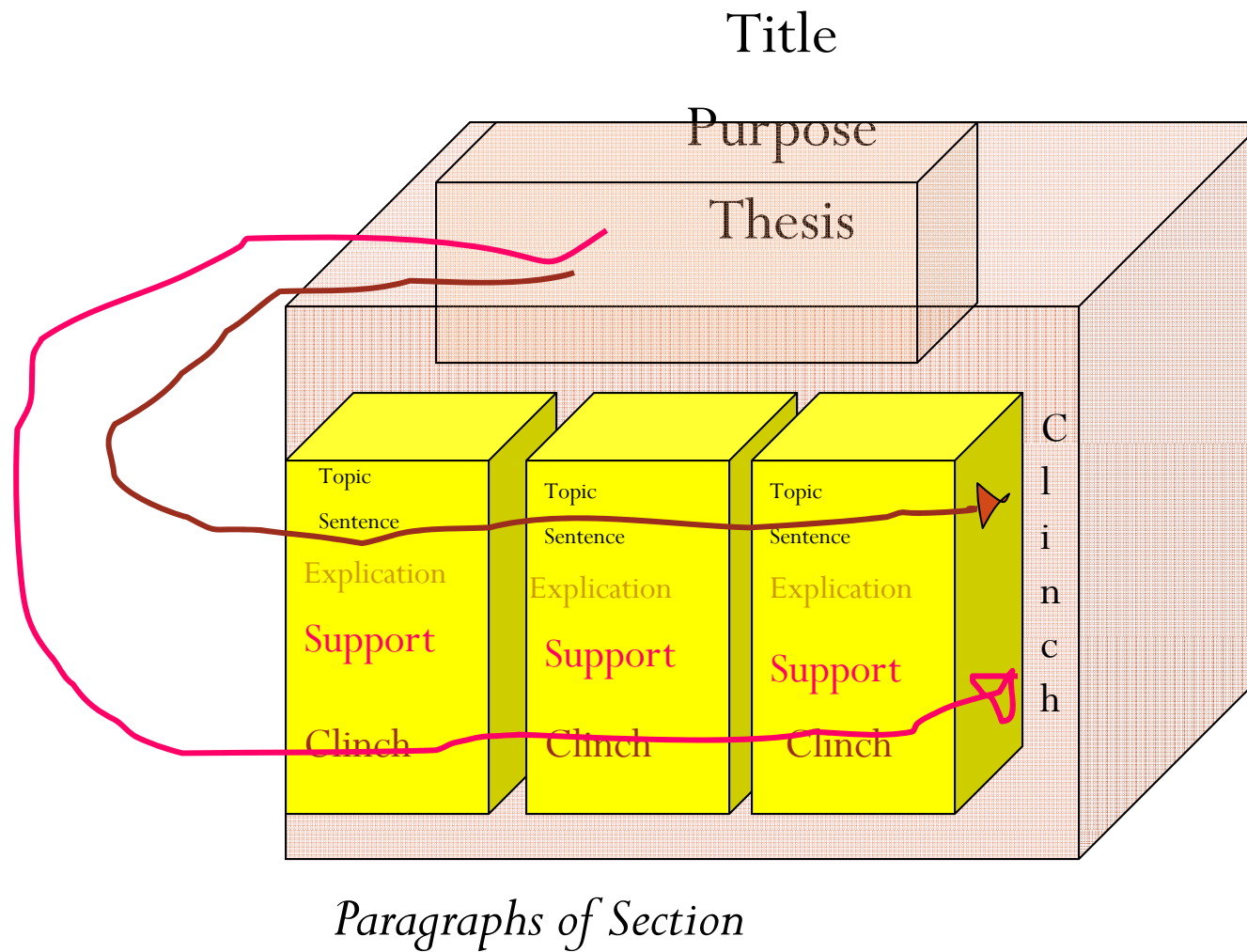
- **Definition:** Single, simple, declarative sentence
- **Functions**
  - Writing flows toward thesis
  - Ockham's razor: inclusion/exclusion
  - Provides transitional references
  - Gives reader a GPS
- **Alternative forms:** *All must serve functions*
  - Questions: Must be compelling to answer
  - Research Question: Focuses curiosity
  - Central idea: Must track through essay
  - False thesis: Thesis that in the end turns into a real thesis
- **Malalternatives**
  - "This paper is about . . ."
  - "My view is . . ."



# Writing Theses

- Write them first and last
- What do you want the reader to understand or accept at the end of their reading?
  - Reduce!
    - to a single, simple, declarative sentence
    - Eliminate all correlative conjunctions
    - Eliminate the run-on
  - Reduce!
    - Occam's razor

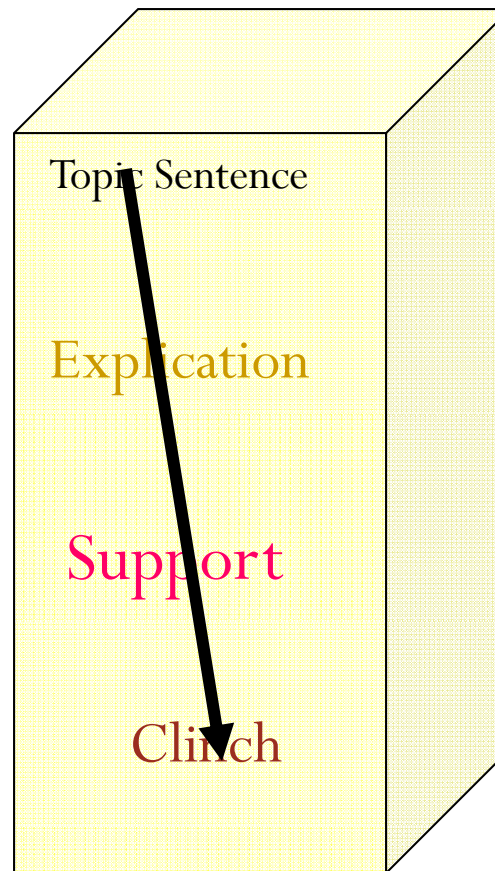
# Section Structure



# Metastatements of section

- Title
  - Fixes section in progression
- Introductory paragraph (or concluding paragraph of section before)
  - Thesis of section defining end point
  - Purpose that sets section aside emerges
- Clinch
  - Sends reader back to thesis of essay and shows progress

# Paragraph Structure



# Evaluating Metastatements

- *How do I know when the author has done a good job?*
  - As a reader you feel oriented throughout.
  - Never lost in text.
- *How do I evaluate my own metastatements?*
  - Assume the place of the reader: get dumb
  - Follow the maps we have depicted
  - Outlining