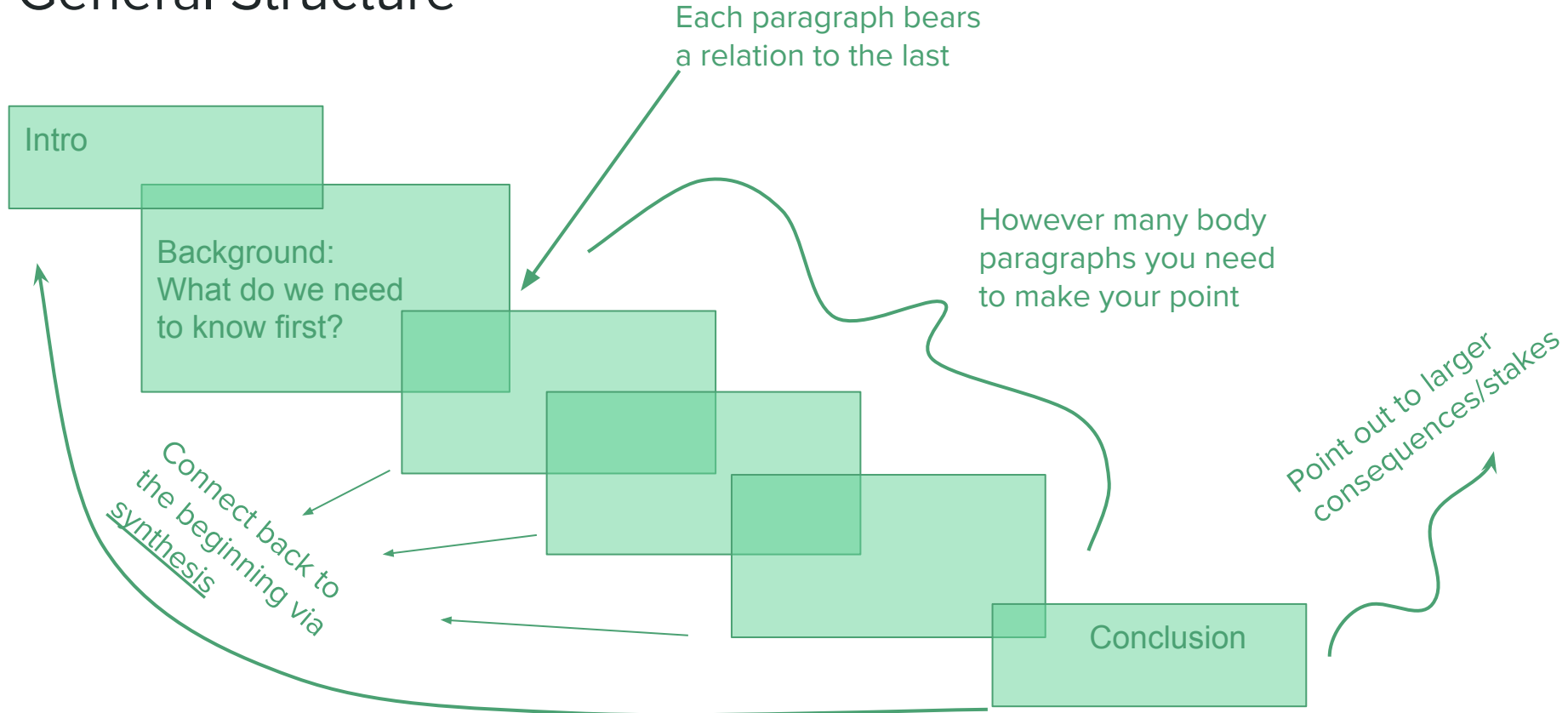


# Organization & Development

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Structure, transitions, & reverse-outlining

# General Structure



# General Structure

- Intro
  - Engaging
  - Microcosm of essay
- Background information?
  - What does the reader need to know to understand your argument?
- Body Paragraphs
  - Logically ordered, build on one another
  - Not interchangeable
  - Tackle one idea at a time
  - Fundamentally related to essay's argument
- Conclusion
  - Looking back: synthesis, not summary
  - Looking outward: stakes, areas for further analysis

# Transitions

- Transition sentences come at the ends of paragraphs and help the reader understand the connection between paragraphs.
- Transition sentences are built on **relationships**. How does this paragraph relate to the next?

We'll see a few examples which emphasize relationships between paragraphs next.

**Contrast:** While the outcome of Dorothea's first marriage offers a critique of a lacking female education system, her second marriage is seen by many readers as a better and more liberated match.

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**Complication:** Just as the dark colors create a sense of foreboding, so too, do the clashing lines signify something is amiss. However, the patterns within these lines add particularity to their warning.

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**Building and reinforcement:** The obfuscating camera angles keep the viewer from seeing the full picture, and the musical cues serve to bolster the viewer's sense of confusion: the contrast between the tone of the music and the overt message relayed by the dialogue reinforce the creeping feeling that the characters are hiding something.

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# Topic sentences

- Topic sentences should describe the general gist of the paragraph, but don't need to be a "mini thesis" themselves.
- Each paragraph should, however, have a relationship to the primary argument.
- Just as a thesis statement doesn't have to be a single sentence, you can introduce a new paragraph over a couple sentences



# Connecting transitions and topics

**The topic of the paragraph should be referenced in the previous transition:**

[Paragraph about Dorothea's dissatisfaction with marriage to Edward Casaubon.]  
While the outcome of Dorothea's first marriage offers a critique of a lacking female education system, her second marriage is seen by many readers as a better and more liberated match.

*Middlemarch* sets Will Ladislaw up as an obvious foil to Casaubon, making the **final pairing between him and Dorothea seem obvious**. However, the novel's ending hints that Dorothea may remain dissatisfied with Will, indicating a problem larger than simple poor compatibility.

# Going back to the beginning

Remember: your thesis is a roadmap for your argument...

...but did you actually take the path you said you would?

- It's okay to change your thesis as part of the revision process!
- Go back after you've written the paper to see what you *actually* argued
- Modify thesis *and* bulk of paper accordingly

# Reverse outlining

- Reverse outlining can be a helpful part of the revision process
  - How is my essay organized?
  - What is each paragraph doing?
  - How is each paragraph related?
- Reverse outlining may surprise you
  - Did I change my argument?
  - Maybe I need to reorder my paragraphs
  - Maybe I need to strengthen my transitions

# How to reverse outline

**Intro:** How am I engaging the reader? What is my thesis?

**Body Paragraphs:** What is the purpose of this paragraph? What is my topic sentence? How is it related to the previous paragraph? How does it lead to the next?

**Conclusion:** Why am I ending here? What have I learned over the course of writing? Why does my argument matter?