PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE: CLIMACTIC OR EMPHATIC ORDER

In climactic or emphatic order of development, the ideas are arranged so that each succeeding idea is more forceful than the one before it. The last idea comes as a climax, the clincher. This type of development works well for those paragraphs in which you are giving reasons for something. Save your best reason, your strongest idea, for the last one, building toward it with others.

EXAMPLE:

I hate to eat in the dorm cafeteria. For one thing, the atmosphere is disagreeable. The walls are a dull green, stained with spilled coffee and food. There is always a racket from the jukebox as well as buzzing and ringing from the video games. What’s more, other eaters seem to yell at each other at the tops of their voices, and the relentless, loud clatter of dishes is annoying. For another thing, the people who work there are slow, sloppy, and rude. Many times I have stood in line for thirty minutes to get a hamburger at lunchtime, just to get my meal with ketchup spilled all over the plate. Worst of all, though, the food is consistently awful. That hamburger at lunch is typically overcooked and dry, and the bun is stale. In fact, now that I think about it, before lunchtime today I’m going to find the location of the nearest McDonald’s.

WRITING EXERCISE:

Write a paragraph in which you make a general statement about something you like or dislike and support the idea with specific reasons. It’s important to arrange the reasons in ascending order of importance. This order may be different from the way the reasons come to your mind, so jot down the ideas and then decide the best order to present them to the reader.