PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE: FAMILIAR TO UNFAMILIAR

In this type of paragraph, the writer sets forth the topic sentence and then develops it by moving from familiar to less familiar material. In other words, the writer starts out with supporting sentences that the reader will understand easily and then moves to material that is new to the reader.

EXAMPLE:

A college-student “bull” session is unique. First of all, there has to be the right kind of food; pizza is by far the most popular. Then, too, the timing has to be right. It should be at night after classes are over for the day. The mood is relaxed and lazy and can be changed easily from attentive seriousness to physical horseplay. In such an environment, the talk can be about anything from deep philosophical problems to trivial gossip—from a discussion of Nietzsche to comments about the career of a particular celebrity or the dating habits of a classmate. In fact, by watching and listening attentively, an observer of a bull session would be able to give an accurate psychograph of each student who participated.

WRITING EXERCISE:

Now try writing a paragraph of your own in which you explain a concept or event. Begin with a topic sentence that specifies the concept or event that you will define or describe, and then develop the idea by moving from more familiar to less familiar material.