PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE: ANALOGY

Making an analogy is similar to doing a comparison of two ideas or persons or things. The major idea is what you want your reader to understand; the functional idea is what you use to make the major idea clear to the reader. The functional idea shares similarities with the major idea in one or two ways. In addition, the functional idea should be

- familiar,
- simple,
- concrete, and
- visual

for the reader.

In analogy, the imagination is used to hold the attention of the reader; in fact, the process of finding likeness can be creative for the writer. However, the writer also needs to be wary of ineffective or false analogies; the major idea and the functional idea must indeed share significant and relevant similarities.

EXAMPLE:

**major idea**

**functional idea**

Trying to remember something is often like an experience Alice has in Through the Looking Glass. When Alice deliberately tries to get to a certain hill, she finds herself walking in the front door again. When she gives up and starts walking in an opposite direction, she finds herself directly in front of the hill. So it is with memory sometimes. When a person strains to remember a name, a telephone number, a song title, or the answer to a test question, the person may not find it or bring it to mind. When he or she finally gives up, disgusted and fatigued, and starts to do something else, then—without warning—suddenly out pops the desired information from its mental hiding place. When a person, like Alice, turns attention to something else, he or she gets to the needed result.

WRITING EXERCISE:

To write a paragraph that explains an idea by using an analogy, begin by considering which major idea you want to communicate to the reader. Next, determine a functional idea that you will use to make the analogy. Keep in mind that you need to point out for the reader just how the functional idea illustrates the main idea.