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**COMP496/901:  
Academic Presentation and Writing Skills  
Writing Skills #2:  
Document Macrostructure**

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# Document Macrostructure

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- Make sure your title identifies the key elements or aspects of your work
- Make it clear at the very outset of the document what it is that you are doing
- Make sure that your document has a well thought out story behind it, and a clear and logical argument structure
- Motivate what you have to say with examples

# Some Maxims about Structure

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- Every story should have a beginning, a middle, and an end
- Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them it, then tell them you've told them it
- First impressions count
- IMRAD: Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion
- The Six Chapters of a Thesis

# Rhetorical Structure Theory

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- Basic idea:
  - The elements of a text are connected together by rhetorical relations
  - A text is coherent by virtue of the presence of these relations--- if the text cannot be analysed in these terms then it is not coherent.

# An Example

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- Example 1:
  - I do research into classic car design.
  - The car I have studied most is the 1954 Holden.
- Example 2:
  - I do research into classic car design.
  - The car I have studied most is the 1997 Holden.

# The Example Continued

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- Example 1:
  - I do research into classic car design.
  - In particular, the car I have studied most is the 1954 Holden.
- Example 2:
  - I do research into classic car design.
  - But the car I have studied most is the 1997 Holden.

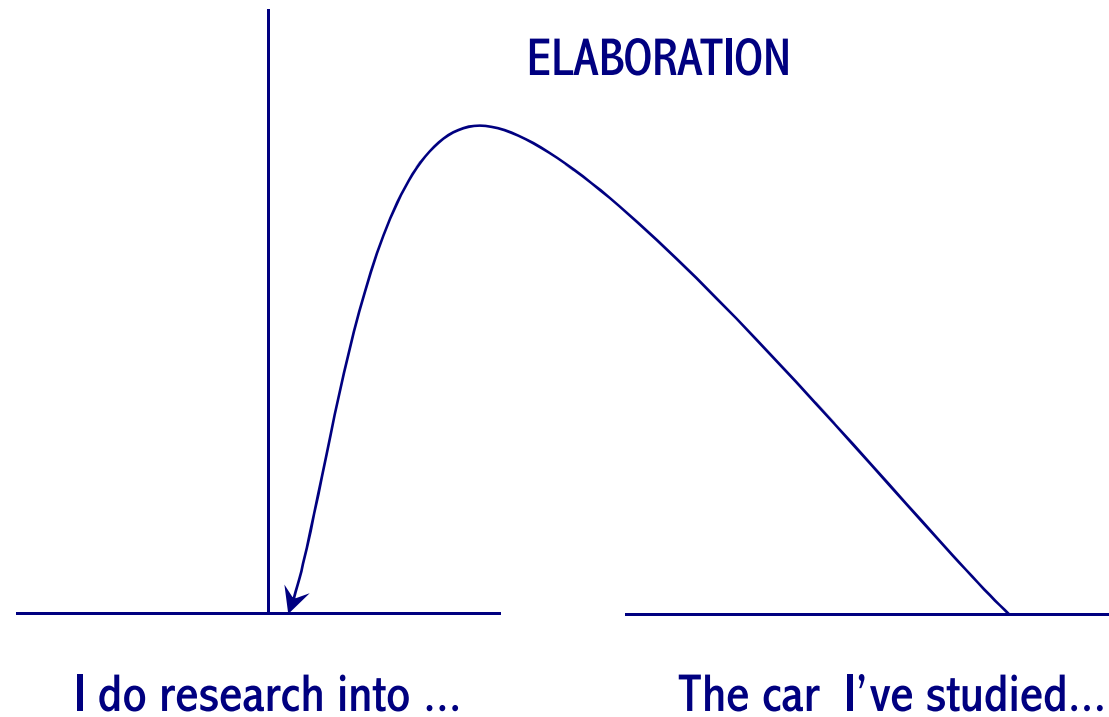
# Relational Propositions

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- ELABORATION(do-research, car-studied-most)
- CONTRAST(do-research, car-studied-most)

# An RST Relation: Elaboration

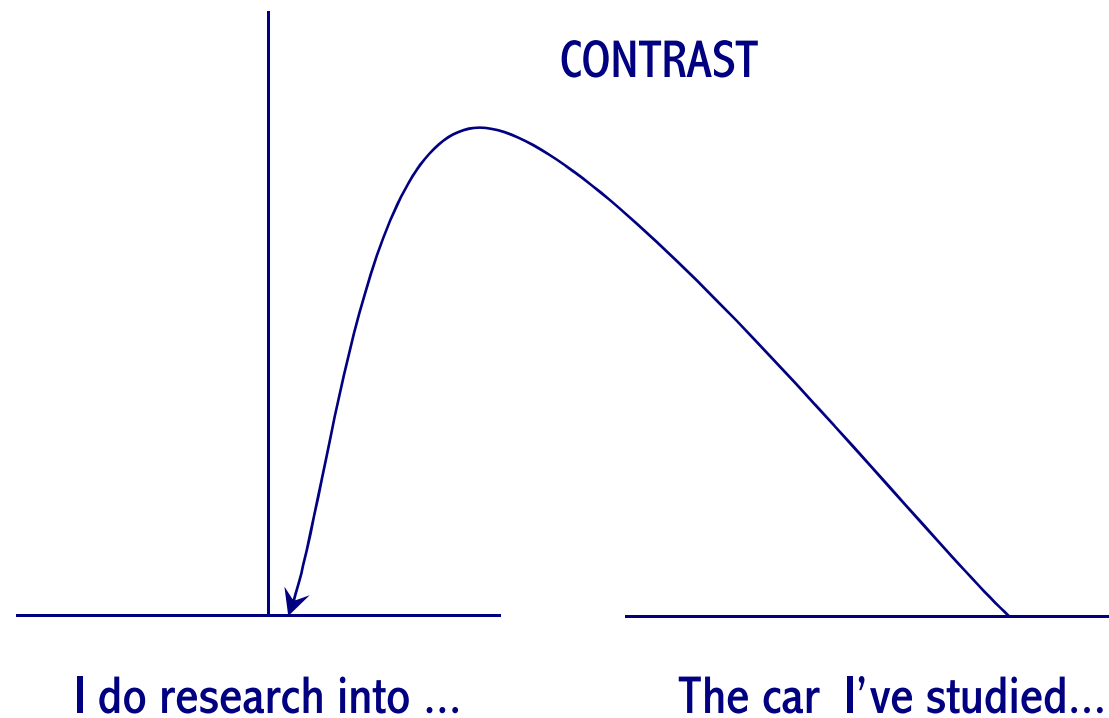
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# An RST Relation: Contrast

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# Beyond Pairs of Sentences

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You should come to the Northern Beaches Ballet performance on Saturday. I'm in three pieces. The show is really good. It got a rave review in the Manly Daily. You can get the tickets from the shop next door.

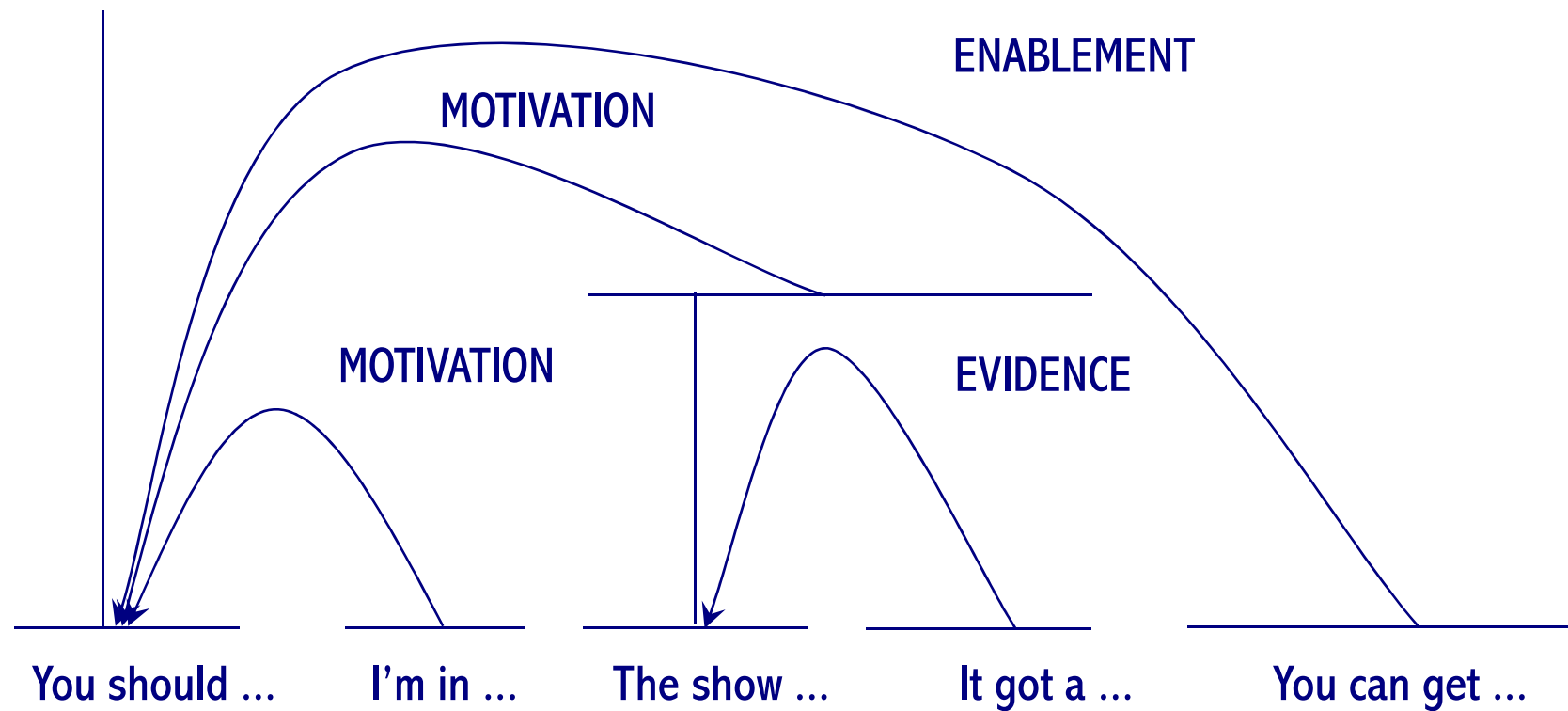
# Beyond Pairs of Sentences

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- D1: You should come to the Northern Beaches Ballet performance on Saturday.
- D2: I'm in three pieces.
- D3: The show is really good.
- D4: It got a rave review in the Manly Daily.
- D5: You can get the tickets from the shop next door.

# The Ballet Text

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# The Relations in RST

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- Circumstance
- Solutionhood
- Elaboration
- Background
- Enablement and Motivation
- Volitional and Non-volitional Cause and Result
- Condition and Otherwise
- Restatement and Summary
- Sequence, Contrast and Joint