

## 12.1 EXPLAINING YOUR TOPIC'S SIGNIFICANCE

### Formula 1: Why, What, So What?

I am studying stories of the Alamo, because I want to understand why voters responded to them in ways that served the interests of local Texas politicians, in order to help readers understand the bigger and more important question **of how regional self-images influence national politics.**

### Formula 2: Big Question, Bigger Question

If we can't answer the question of how romantic movies have changed in the last fifty years,condition/first question **then we can't answer a more important question: How have our cultural depictions of romantic love changed?**consequence/larger, more important second question

If we can't answer the question of how our depictions of romantic love have changed,second question **then we can't answer an even more important one: How does our culture shape the expectations of young men and women about marriage and families?**consequence/larger, more important question

### **Organizing Sources: The B-E-A Method**

**BACKGROUND** source: Something a writer relies on for general information that a) helps bring the main topic into focus, or b) helps guide him to exhibit sources. May or may not appear in the final draft.

Example: Encyclopedia article on Rosa Parks in a research paper on MLK's rhetoric

**EXHIBIT/EXAMPLE** source: Something that the writer holds up for analysis or interpretation, usually a text that is, or is about, the main topic of the essay.

Example: In a literature paper, a block quotation from a poem you are discussing; in an art history paper, an image; in a political science paper, a body of survey data.

**ARGUMENT** source: A source the writer is engaging in "conversation" with. A source whose ideas the writer is using, refuting, affirming, appealing to, refining, or qualifying in some way.

Example: a statement about the exhibit by an outside critic or scholar.