

How to not write a bad academic art paper.

(or, common problems and things to remember)

READ the directions.

Don't just describe the
reading.

WHY?

Because your reader
would rather just read the
reading.

(And come up with their own ideas.)

And because this paper
isn't about what Edward
Shanken thinks.

This paper is about
what **YOU** think.

Do use the reading's
argument as **SUPPORT**
for your argument.

What's the difference?

THE READING
(Edward Shanken's ideas)

THE READING
(Edward Shanken's ideas)

Your ideas

Your ideas

What about the
artwork?

Don't JUST describe
the artwork.

Tell me what the **artwork**
DOES (or fails to do).

But I'm not an art
expert.

This is you speaking.

Duh.

This is me (Kelly) speaking.

It's ok if I don't agree
with you....

Me again.

I disagree with
everybody. (including my
professors)

Still me.

(except Jesse
Jackson...mostly)

I think you get the point.

Try.

And **SUPPORT** your
argument with the
reading.

And someone else who probably knows what they're talking about.

The artwork LOOKS
(sounds, smells, tastes, feels...)
like this.

This is you in the writing assignment.

The artwork DOES
this.

Still you for a while.

It **DOES** this, because it **LOOKS**
(*etc.*) like this, or because it **IS** this
thing. And those things **DO** this, or
that, sometimes they **DO** that too.

And Edward Shanken
AGREES with me.

And this other person
AGREES with me!

So...

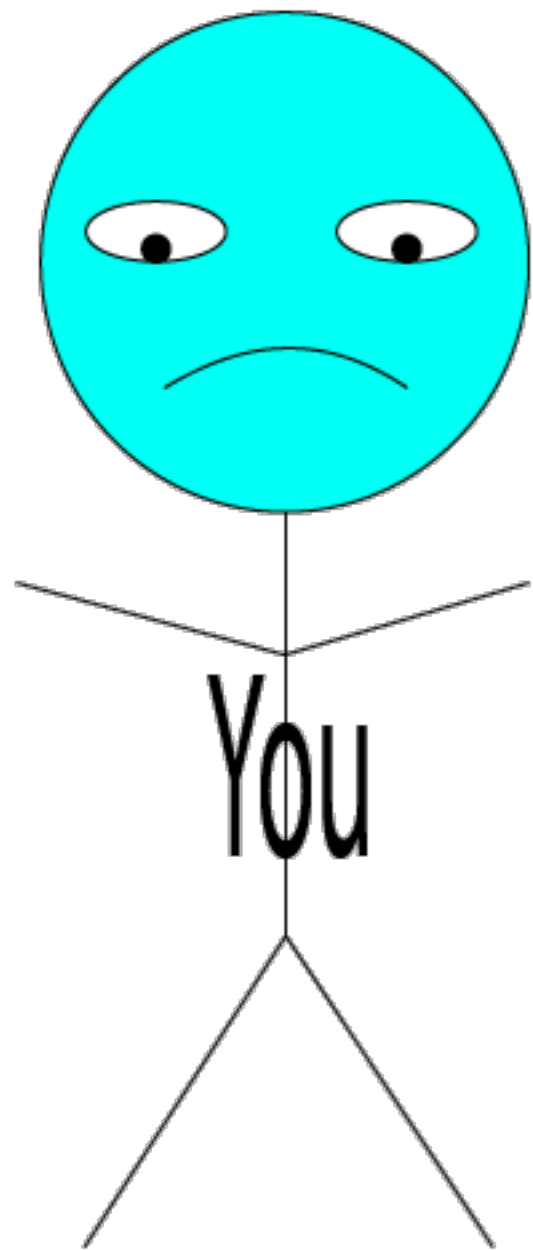
This is something the **artwork** does
(or doesn't do), because of **these**
reasons, and **these experts** (artists,
curators, theorists...) **agree** with me.

The point of your paper.

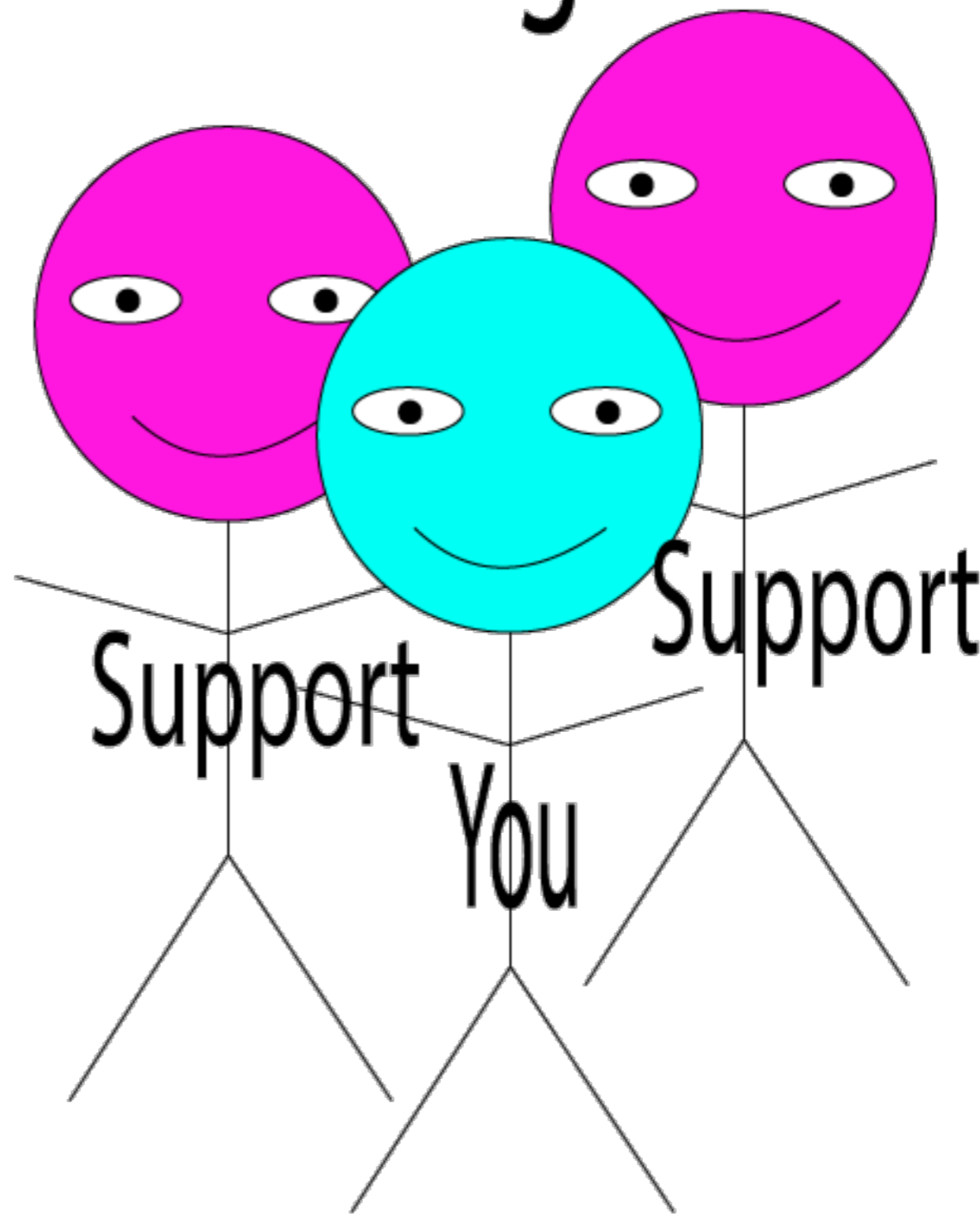
You should agree with
me too.

I (Kelly) might actually agree with you now.

Opinion



Critical Argument



You only have enough
room to make one
argument in these writings.

Now that you know
how to do that.

DON'T

Don't write: I believe, I
think, I love, My
interpretation, I agree....

The reader knows that you wrote the writing. They assume that you believe your beliefs and think what you think.

Also don't write: This is true, beautiful, unique, interesting...

Unless you are going to **define**
truth, beauty, uniqueness, or
interestingness and find **support**
for this definition.

Never assume that the reader shares the same definition for conceptual words.

con·cep·tu·al

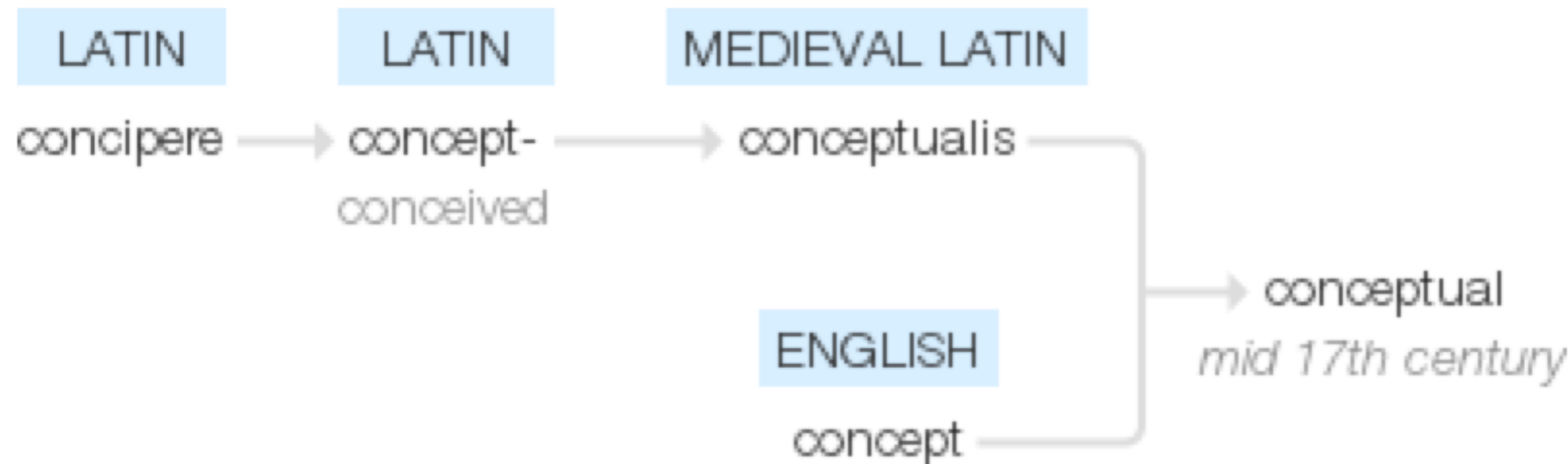
/kən'sep(t)SH(əw)əl/

adjective

adjective: **conceptual**

of, relating to, or based on mental concepts.
"philosophy deals with conceptual difficulties"

Origin



mid 17th century: from medieval Latin *conceptualis*, from Latin *concept-* 'conceived,' from the verb *concupere* (see [concept](#)).

Speaking of
definitions...

Never use words that
you don't understand.

Even if they're from the
reading.

Or words like thus,
however, therefore, such
as, nonetheless...

Words from the reading support your argument; **however**, they work against you if you don't know what they mean.

Also, don't trust
spellcheck.

Don't forget to use quotes or write "According to..." if you are using someone else's ideas.

Don't ask questions
unless you also answer
them.

Questions are great in
discussion.

But this paper is about
what **YOU** think.

ALWAYS check your
links.

READ your paper
before you turn it in.

And FOLLOW the
directions.