SEDATIVE-HYPNOTICS: An Introduction

**sedation** --- calming effects, relaxation
**hypnotic** effects --- sleepiness, drowsy

large category of drugs
1. ethyl alcohol = ethanol
2. tranquilizers
   “minor” tranquilizers – barbiturates, benzodiazepines
   “major” tranquilizers – neuroloptics = antipsychotics = phenothiazines

effects on NS
usually involve **GABA** (gamma-hydroxy-buteric-acid)
   the most widespread **inhibitory** NT in the NS
   (whose precursor molecule, curiously, is the most widespread
   **excitatory** NT in the NS, namely glutamate)

GABA RS has 5 “subunits” to it, onto which attach various drugs

GABA RS, when it opens, lets *in* increasing #s of chloride ions (Cl-) ---
   increases the **hyper**polarization of the neuron --- postsynaptic cell
   is less likely to fire