

6.1 Introduction to Argument Structure

For Teachers:

Students have engaged in question-building and evaluation, preliminary research strategies, and have begun building literature reviews synthesizing, analyzing, and evaluating relevant and diverse perspectives related to lines of inquiry. This module will introduce students to a few common argument forms, giving them a foundation for advocating logically for conclusions drawn from the perspectives of their research. Each argument form provides a different focus point; the choice of which will be dependent on the student's choices of inquiry, the perspectives engaged, and the type of conclusion they wish to draw. This may begin with a guided practice using provided sample sources, starting with reading and group discussion, and then a full-class topic and question-building exercise. At that point, teachers can move the practice to small groups or choose to keep the activity in the whole class; students will need to take a position and then use at least two of the practice sources for evidence collection.

Source materials provided for practice in this module center on various responses to human boredom, a staple element of experience (both in and out of work environments). Selections from Camus's *Myth of Sisyphus* provide the basis for the famous myth in which Sisyphus is tasked with pushing a boulder to the top of the hill, only for it to return to the base—an iconic existential metaphor for the task-completion experience of mundane human life. The challenge piece by Kierkegaard includes selections from his work, *Either/Or*, in which his pseudonymous narrator "A" advocates for a rotation of mindsets to mitigate boredom in a more productive, less violent way, showing man's tendency toward 'boredom-as-creative' or 'boredom-as-destructive.' The *Forbes* article, "Why Neuroscientists Say, 'Boredom Is Good For Your Brain's Health'" provides a follow-up argument, advocating for the positive effects of boredom on brain health. Finally, the TEDx lecture, "The 4 superpowers of design" applies the mindset of creative energies in the workforce, specifically advocating for designers' talents in the business sector.

Once students (or small groups or the full-class group) have collected evidence, the teacher will guide students through the basics of each argument structure: Classical, for a more theoretical-type argument where determining definitions of concepts is central to the logic; Toulmin, for arguments that are strongly aligned to a particular position and secondary perspectives are given and refuted (most general arguments may work with this form); and Rogerian, where students are compromising or consensus-building from a variety of perspectives. For the sake of the practice, starting with the group's argumentative position and applying evidence through the Toulmin method is suggested. Teachers may guide the full class through a sample Toulmin outline, using student suggestions for the thesis and supporting evidence. This guided practice will serve as preparation for the formal assessment of this module.