

# Unit 1 Foundations of Reason and Logic

## Unit 1 Challenges and Opportunities for Learning

Whenever we try to convince someone of our point of view or justify our actions, we do so by giving reasons for our beliefs and actions. Giving reasons for our beliefs is also an important feature of inquiry in general, and philosophical inquiry in particular. In the context of this course, students will be invited to look critically at the reasoning behind various philosophical viewpoints and beliefs, and to provide reasons in support of their own viewpoints and beliefs.

Unit 1 examines some general features of reasoning, including how reasoning can be faulty. In reasoning about reasoning, students will be better equipped to critically assess the reasoning of others and they will be better able to construct their own reasoning in support of their own ideas. This unit does not have to be taught at the beginning of the course; it could be left until later in the course or returned to occasionally throughout the course.

## Unit 1 Culminating Activity (assessment of learning)

The Unit 1 culminating activity—The Logic Skit—is a framework around which students develop their knowledge and understanding of reason and logic. Use the ideas that follow to help your students begin working towards completion of a skit in which they get to demonstrate an understanding of the general principles of reasoning, along with humorous examples of reasoning gone wrong.

### Description of Culminating Activity

Students will work in small groups (of three or four) to prepare a skit that will showcase various aspects of reasoning. The skit will illustrate different types of arguments (induction, deduction, and abduction), show an example of distortion in thinking, give examples of fallacies from formal and informal logic, and demonstrate a critical awareness of a principle or law of reasoning.

Assessment of the activity could be adapted to include the spectators, who could be asked to identify each of the elements of the skit and/or the group members, who could evaluate the extent of each group member's contribution to the group task.

### Learning Goals

In preparing the skit, students will be required to review the key ideas and concepts from the three unit chapters. They will then incorporate some of these ideas in a script that will form the basis of a skit. The result will be a consolidation of their understanding of what it means to reason.

### Learning Skills

The development of learning skills and work habits is an integral part of a student's learning (*Growing Success*, p. 10). Specifically, teaching and assessment of these learning skills—responsibility, collaboration, independent work, organization, self-regulation, and initiative—will enhance students' success in the culminating activity, entire course, and post-secondary life.

Use BLM E Learning Skills Tracking Sheet to track students' learning skills for this unit and for the culminating activity.

### **Prior Learning Needed**

In the culminating activity, students will demonstrate their understanding of key ideas from Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

### **Materials Needed for Culminating Activity**

- BLM 1.1 Unit 1 Culminating Activity: The Logic Skit

### **Motivational Strategies for Engaging Students**

The opening activity for Unit 1, Chapter 1, involving students watching an excerpt from the film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, can be used to introduce the culminating activity, Unit 1 in general, and Chapter 1 specifically by humourously depicting bad reasoning. Ask students to consider what reasoning in general, and what constitutes good reasoning and bad reasoning.

### **Accommodations**

As an alternative to participating in a group to produce a skit, students could make individual presentations to the teacher that incorporate the same elements included in the skit (see the checklist in BLM 1.1). Students may also be given a modified checklist or create two brief skits if one all-encompassing skit is too challenging.

### **Differentiated Instruction (alternative assessment opportunities)**

Students could submit a script without actually performing the dramatization, either individually or in groups. A more ambitious undertaking might be to have students create a film of the skit and present it to the class.

### **Assessment Criteria**

The Unit 1 culminating activity assessment criteria appear on BLM 1.1.