# Moving Forward: Use these Tools in Your Classroom to **combat student apathy when introducing an assignment**

In this situation, students are in the third quadrant of Kort’s Spiral, where they are frustrated. We want to move them along into the fourth or first quadrants, where they are ready for a new challenge, hopeful, and curious.

## When students have apathy when you are introducing an assignment, here are some activities or exercises you can use to move them along, or re-orient them:

**Make time to allow students to ask questions about the assignment.**

Ask students to read and annotate an assignment in order to encourage them to ask questions; have students read the assignment aloud to the class or to one another in small groups, and facilitate a discussion about the assignment; provide a forum in a chat, message board, or Discord that facilitates discussion without having to “confront” you, the teacher; make a FAQ for the assignment. In general, assume that your assignment is introduced only after you and your students have had time to ask and answer questions.

**Make room to explore the ways in which an assignment is personal​.**

Highlight role-playing as a skill you are evaluating; highlight the possible agreements or satisfactory consequences of writing that are possible even if they take a side that’s distasteful or immoral to students; ask students to role play both sides of an argument in order to explore the value of the position they don’t want to take; allow students time to describe their personal experiences that lead to the objection and clearly express your valuing of those experiences; give students a puzzle and ask them how they can adopt this position and still be true to their own experiences and values.

**Provide a context so students understand how performance builds a writing ethos.**

Explore with your students how this assignment fits with the course’s goals or other assignments; ask them to connect this assignment to an argument or situation from their personal, professional, or student lives; give examples of how the skills and knowledge in this assignment will help them navigate arguments and problems in their futures; build in pre-writing and drafting right away with clearly-defined goals and give feedback on those pre-writes and drafts.