

# Organization methods



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Organizational methods and tone used in Douglas Todd's "Beware the Boredom Boom" Douglas Todd's essay "Beware the Boredom Boom" is a logically organized piece about the often minimized plague of boredom eating away at society. The topic he is approaching in this essay is one that could be easily dismissed by any serious reader, and so it must be treated carefully and written in such a way that creates interest without over or under dramatizing the problem.

I am going to discuss Todd's organizational methods and tone as they lend to the overall effectiveness of the essay. Todd begins his essay with a couple of brief stories about people in the mall experiencing boredom. This is a solid introduction, as story-telling is pretty much a certain way to spark readers' interests. Todd then branches into a brief description of boredom over the course of human history, as described by major historical figures.

This is where he is building his case for boredom as a legitimate topic of academic discussion, and then he finally dives into the content of his essay. "Boredom is not a subject to be treated tongue-in-cheek. Boredom matters" (pp. 503). Here, with the introduction of his thesis, he is demanding that his readers take the subject seriously, telling them outright that boredom is not a joke and he is not about to treat it casually.

He used the device of storytelling to give a light-hearted, interest-sparking appeal to his essay, only to later disallow the topic to be treated in a flippant way at all. This further promotes the reader's interest by catching him off-guard. Todd really needed to jolt the reader like this in order to force him to take seriously a topic that many understand as being frustrating but benign. Once he has the reader's attention, Todd is able to start presenting his

argument for boredom as a chronic syndrome having an increasingly negative effect on our society.

He cites various studies and scientific figures as a means of building his case for the deeply-impacting negative effects of boredom, outlining what a truly serious and potentially devastating problem it really is. He also directly addresses the seeming paradox of boredom becoming such a prevalent plague in a society which is constantly bombarded with various forms of stimulation and ever-experience-enhancing advancing technology. “ Plugged in at home and on the street to TV, the Internet, laptops, DVDs, cell phones and MP3s, many young people are becoming merely reactive” (pp.

XXX). In fact, through his carefully presented research and thoroughly articulated arguments, Todd is able to effectively show the reader just how it is those very elements are what is causing, promoting, and perpetuating this increasingly threatening downward spiral of aimless boredom. Todd’s organizational method here was highly effective, because he is effectively able to grab the reader’s attention right from the beginning, and, once he had it, he is able to maintain that attention through his various examples of scientific research, personal testimonies, and direct quotes.

This organizational method also succeeded in forcing the reader to take the subject matter seriously, which was Todd’s primary goal. He was also able to succeed in doing this with his writing style and tone. Todd’s tone throughout this piece is slightly humorous while also remaining very serious. His tone can seem light-hearted at times, and his personal voice is ever present in his word choice and sentence construction: “ It was impossible to be bored in

hard-scrabble primitive days because the fight for survival kept you forever on your toes” (pp. XXX).

However, this light-hearted writing style is yet another device that Todd employs in order to keep his reader’s attention. It is through his witty remarks that the reader is able to more fully understand the points he is making. As in the example stated above, while it does seem like a sarcastic side comment, this is yet another idea that forces the reader to pause and really think about the argument Todd has presented: after a brief reflection, this “sarcastic” comment makes perfect sense, and seems to succinctly explain how exactly people got to be so terribly bored.

Todd’s essay is very effective at treating the “problem” of boredom in a serious and engaging way. His writing style is clear, concise, and simple. His organization is very structured and creates an appropriate step-by-step approach to the idea of something as common as boredom actually being a social plight. His tone carries the reader through in a way that was helpful and guiding while also being challenging, forcing the reader to really think.