

A CREATIVE APPROACH TO THE CLASSICAL PROGYMNASMATA

Writing Rhetoric

THESIS PART 2

TEACHER'S EDITION

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Writing & Rhetoric Book 11: Thesis Part 2 Teacher's Edition
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Thesis Part 2

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A Typical Teaching Week

These guidelines are intended to help bring some predictability to lesson planning.

Although the elements of grammar are important aspects of this course, its primary focus is writing and rhetoric. We recommend that you teach a simple, but rich, grammar curriculum in parallel with the lessons in *Writing & Rhetoric: Thesis Part 2*. By simple, we mean to suggest that you avoid a grammar program with a writing component. Two different writing methods would most likely work against each other and cause an imbalance in the school day. Instead, look for a grammar program that focuses on grammatical concepts, provides plenty of practice sentences, and encourages diagramming.

You may want to provide same-day grammar instruction several days a week, preferably separating Writing & Rhetoric from grammar study by an hour or two. Or you may want to alternate weeks between a grammar program and Writing & Rhetoric. This requires some negotiation in your language arts program for the year. If you aim to do two Writing & Rhetoric books per school year, that would equal approximately twenty lessons. The preparatory and branch-introduction lessons of this book (1–5, 7, and 9) each can be completed in a week. Each of the speech-writing lessons (6, 8, and 10) may take three or more weeks to complete, depending on your needs and available time. These three lessons include research, prewriting, writing, revision, and delivery. You will have to choose a grammar program with this consideration in mind.

This book is divided into two sections:

- Lessons 1–4 are preparatory lessons that orient students to speech writing using the canons of rhetoric.
- Lessons 5–10 give students speech-writing practice in the three traditional branches of oration. The odd-numbered lessons (5, 7, and 9) each introduce a different branch and supply outstanding examples of speeches for the purpose of inspiration and imitation. The even-numbered lessons (6, 8, and 10) are essentially concise practicums and follow the five canons of rhetoric as a way to write and deliver speeches.

The following table illustrates some possible options for scheduling lessons. As always with Writing & Rhetoric, teachers have the freedom to pick and choose the lesson elements, schedule, and pace that suit the needs of their classrooms and students. You can feel free to add or subtract time—days or even weeks—as is appropriate for the lesson and for your class.

Lessons 1–5, 7, and 9

<p>Day 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read lesson introduction or read part of it and assign remainder for homework ● If lesson introduction was completed, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ tell back (narrate or summarize) text (Tell It Back) ◆ engage in Talk About It discussions 	<p>Day 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If lesson introduction was assigned for homework, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ tell back (narrate or summarize) text (Tell It Back) ◆ engage in Talk About It discussions ● Work on Write & Discuss exercise ● Begin Go Deeper if time allows
<p>Day 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin or continue to work on Go Deeper 	<p>Days 4 and 5 (if needed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to work on or finish Go Deeper

Lessons 6, 8, and 10 (Speech-Writing Practicums)

Please note that for lessons 6, 8, and 10, the schedule is presented in weekly (rather than daily) increments so that teachers can tailor their day-to-day tasks based on their classes' needs and progress. This schedule allows for maximum flexibility but also creates a helpful end point after several weeks of diligent work.

Sixteen-Week Schedule

<p>Week 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read lesson introduction ● Begin Planning Time 	<p>Week 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue Planning Time ● Begin Writing Time if time allows 	<p>Week 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin or continue Writing Time ● Complete Revise It ● <i>See detailed schedule for Speak It</i>
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Nineteen-Week Schedule

<p>Week 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read lesson introduction ● Begin Planning Time 	<p>Week 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue Planning Time 	<p>Week 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work through Writing Time ● Begin Revise It if time allows 	<p>Week 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin or complete Revise It ● Work through Speak It
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Detailed Schedule for Lessons 1–5, 7, and 9

Day One

1. The teacher can model fluency by reading the introductory text aloud while students follow along. Teacher-guided reading is often helpful for prompting discussion, monitoring comprehension, and inviting student questions. If preferred, however, teachers can ask students to read the introduction independently. Another possibility is for teachers to read part of the introduction in class as a “teaser” and assign the remainder for homework.
2. If possible, Tell It Back and Talk About It should immediately follow the reading of the text, while the text is still fresh in students' minds. If the lesson reading is assigned as homework (see previous step), teachers can engage students with Tell It Back and Talk About It the following day.

The process of summary narration (“telling back”) is intended to improve comprehension and long-term memory, and it can be done in a variety of ways. Pairs of students can retell key points from the introduction to each other, or selected individuals can summarize orally to the entire class. Solo students can tell back key points into a recording device or to an instructor. Students in middle or high school are capable of written summary narrations, and in some cases, written summaries are encouraged. Summary writing should be completed individually and then can be shared with the class as desired.

Teachers can, at any time, require an oral summary to be written or a written summary to be verbalized. You can feel free to make other adaptations to suit your class's needs as well, such as requiring a longer, in-depth oral narration of the introductory text or summarization of an excerpt from a speech. If you prefer long oral narrations such as these, please consider these tips:

- Avoid rereading a passage to students. Let them rely on the strength of their memories. Students will pay more attention if they know they will hear a passage only once and be expected to tell it back.

- Remember that oral narrations of a speech excerpt are detailed retellings that try to capture the main points of the speech in chronological order as well as rich vocabulary words.
- Ask other students to assist if the narrator falters in his or her retelling. Be sure, however, to give enough quiet space for the narrator to think clearly about what he or she has just heard. Don't be hasty to jump in and "rescue" a narrator.

Talk About It is designed to help students analyze the meaning of the introductory text and excerpts from speeches. Intentional conversation allows ideas to be formulated and tested and is often an important step toward persuasive writing and speaking.

Days Two and Three

1. If some or all of the introductory reading was assigned for homework on day 1, Tell It Back and Talk About It can be completed on day 2.
2. Students will next encounter the Write & Discuss exercise, in which short writing assignments precede in-depth class discussions. Writing is always an excellent way to improve the quality of participation in any academic conversation. By giving students time to consider their answers on paper, teachers will find that even quiet and reticent students are more likely to engage in the discussion.
3. Following Write & Discuss, students work with the lesson's most important ideas through the Go Deeper exercises. Go Deeper is all about practicing important skills essential to each lesson.

Days Four and Five

Students may need the fourth day (or more) to complete the Go Deeper exercise.

Detailed Schedule for Lessons 6, 8, and 10

These speech-writing lessons walk students through the canons (or rules) of rhetoric as they compose persuasive speeches for each of the three branches of oration identified by Aristotle. Lesson 6 covers judicial speech, lesson 8 focuses on ceremonial speech, and lesson 10 highlights political speech.

Week One

1. The introductory text helps to orient students with a specific case study. These case studies are situations that serve as the basis of a judicial, ceremonial, or political speech. You may want to allow more than one day for students to carefully read through and process this material. Along the way, teachers should check for comprehension. Use open-ended questions to gauge the students' understanding of the purpose of the particular branch of rhetoric and how the case study serves as an illustration of the branch.
2. Planning Time follows the introduction and provides a series of steps that aid students in the discovery of a topic and what to say about it. These steps include research, invention, and arrangement. Students can get started on planning during the first week with choosing and researching their topic, prewriting, and inventing possible theses. Annotation should be required as much as possible during the research phase of speech writing. It can help a student locate vocabulary words, proper nouns, and important concepts for drafting speeches. The articles included in the supplementary material following lessons 6, 8, and 10 are formatted for easy annotation.

Week Two

1. Planning Time research and invention should continue in the second week. Check on students to help them narrow the subject matter and the scope of their research. Students can

feel daunted by the sheer amount of information available on their subjects. Setting realistic expectations is an important part of planning.

2. A good goal for the end of the second week is to have chosen a final thesis and completed the step of arrangement or, in other words, the outline of the speech.
3. In the sixteen-week schedule, students can begin Writing Time if time allows.

Week Three

1. The Writing Time section includes the exercise of speech writing itself. You will want to take multiple days to complete this step. Even when students are creating a rough draft from their outline, they should be practicing the five virtues of style. Space is provided to jot down ideas for each paragraph and to devise vivid sentences using rhetorical devices.
2. For the sixteen-week schedule, students should complete the Revise It section. For the nineteen-week schedule, students can begin Revise It if time allows.

The Revise It section walks students through a list of suggestions designed to improve their rough drafts. Most students can do competent self-editing at this age and provide thoughtful feedback to each other. However, teachers are still the best source for giving editorial feedback and requesting rewrites.

Keep at least a day between rough-draft completion and revision. This “breather” helps students to look at their work with fresh eyes. However, teachers may find it valuable to pair students together to read their speeches out loud and give each other ideas for revision. A content rubric is included at the back of the book as an aid to self-reflection, partner feedback, or grading by teachers.

3. After receiving teacher feedback, students can move forward with composing the final draft. Remind students that even a final draft can be revised before the delivery of a speech if phrasing or word choice feel clunky when spoken.

Week Four (Nineteen-Week Schedule)

1. Students should begin or complete the Revise It section.
2. The Speak It section creates opportunities for students to memorize their speeches and practice delivery. Please consider using a recording device whenever it suits the situation. When using electronics, students should listen to their recordings to get an idea of what sounds right and what needs to be improved. Have students read the elocution instructions at the back of the book to help them work on skill in delivery.

A delivery rubric is included in every Speak It section. This rubric can be used to give feedback while practicing delivery and for evaluating the formal delivery of the speech.

3. Applaud the delivery of every speech vigorously.

Speak It in the Sixteen-Week Schedule—Speech Festival

You may have noticed that the sixteen-week schedule option deemphasizes the **Speak It** portion of the lesson to allow ample time for research and writing. Upon finishing *Thesis Part 2*, you can complete Speak It by preparing for and putting on a speech festival. Students will pick their favorite of the three speeches, memorize it, and deliver it to classmates, the whole school, or family and friends.

About two weeks prior to the festival, students can follow the directions found in the **Speak It** section for memorizing and delivering their speeches. Most of this work can be done outside of class time, although teachers may want to listen to a practice delivery and provide feedback. Teachers will need to determine which method of presentation they prefer their students to practice during delivery, whether total memorization, a cue card system, or access to the full text of the speech. When time is a factor, it is best for students to repetitively practice delivery at home and also have a copy of the speech text at the podium.

Before the festival begins, make sure to test the sound system for any bugs, and have a podium in place. Whether or not students use the podium, it can be a helpful “home base” to hold notes and a bottle of water. Some students may be jittery with nervousness during a speech festival. Be sure to make your occasion as fun and relaxed as possible. Have a mingling time before the speeches commence for speakers to greet their audience and a reception time afterward so that students can receive praise and affirmation. A host should briefly introduce each speaker with some lighthearted anecdotes to ease anxiety. For the sake of attention and audience comfort, a series of speeches should go no longer than forty minutes without an intermission for stretching.

Note: If you would prefer not to have a speech festival but still need to stick to a sixteen-week schedule, you could shorten the time needed for research by forgoing outside sources and instead having students use only the supplementary material provided at the end of each lesson. This would allow you to add time for Speak It into the last week of the schedule.

A More Leisurely Pace

Writing & Rhetoric: Thesis Part 2 is packed full of good information! While we have designed this book to fit into a single semester, you have the option to stretch it into a year-long course if you feel your students would benefit from having more time to absorb all of the information and complete the more challenging speech-writing tasks. To create a thirty-two-week course for this book, you could allow two weeks each for lessons 1–5, 7, and 9 and six weeks each for lessons 6, 8, and 10. Then plan the individual tasks of each lesson as best suits your classroom needs.

Introduction

Two thousand-plus years ago, the Greeks developed a system of persuasive speaking known as rhetoric. The Romans fell in love with rhetoric because it both was practical for the real world and served the need of training orators in their growing republic. In order to prepare their students for oration, the Romans invented a complementary system of persuasive writing known as the *progymnasmata*: *pro-* meaning “preliminary” and *gymnas* meaning “exercises.” The *progymnasmata* were the primary method used in Graeco-Roman schools to teach young people the elements of rhetoric. This happened in a grammar school (called a *grammaticus*) sometime around the age of ten for upper-class students.

There are several ancient “*progymns*” still in existence. The most influential *progymns* were by Hermogenes of Tarsus, who lived in the second century, and by Aphthonius of Antioch, who lived during the fourth century, just as the western Roman Empire was collapsing. Even after the great cities of Rome lay in ruins, the *progym* continued as the primary method for teaching writing and oration during the Middle Ages and even into early modern times.

The Writing & Rhetoric series is based on the *progymnasmata* of ancient Rome. This method assumes that students learn best by reading excellent examples of literature and by growing their writing skills through imitation. It is incremental, meaning that it goes from simpler exercises to more complex exercises, and it moves from the concrete to the abstract. One of the beauties of the *progym* is that it grows with the student through the stages of childhood development that are dubbed by modern classical educators as the “trivium,” a term borrowed from medieval education.¹ These exercises effectively take a young writer from the grammar phase through the logic phase and finally to the rhetoric phase.

In a democracy such as Athens or a republic such as Rome, rhetoric was a powerful way to enter into public conversations. In the words of Yale rhetorician Charles Sears Baldwin, “Rhetoric is conceived by Aristotle as the art of giving effectiveness to the truth.”² He adds that “the true theory of rhetoric is the energizing of knowledge, the bringing of truth to bear upon men.”³ Rhetoric thus had an intentional public purpose, that is, to persuade people to embrace truth and its corollaries: goodness and beauty. It was designed to enjoin right behavior by holding up to public scrutiny examples of virtue and wickedness. Of course, the person using rhetoric was also supposed to be virtuous—above all, honest and just.

There is an urgency and a real purpose to rhetoric. It was never meant to be empty forms of speaking and composition. It was never meant to be only eloquence and skill of delivery. It was certainly never meant to be manipulative sound bites and commercials made to benefit an unscrupulous political or economic class. Rather, it was intended for every citizen as a means to engage articulately with the urgent ideas of the day. As the old saying goes, “Whoever does not learn rhetoric will be a victim of it.”

1. In medieval times, the trivium was originally the lower division of the seven liberal arts. For the modern idea that these studies correspond to childhood development, please refer to Dorothy Sayers, *The Lost Tools of Learning*.
2. Charles Sears Baldwin, *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic Interpreted from Representative Works* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), 3.
3. Baldwin, *Medieval Rhetoric*.

The best preparation for rhetoric is still the *progymnasmata*, the preliminary exercises. In this book you will find these exercises creatively updated to meet the needs of modern children. We have embraced the method both as it was used for Roman youth and as it develops the skills demanded by contemporary education.

- It teaches the four modes of discourse—narration, exposition, description, and argumentation—while at the same time blending them for maximum persuasive impact.
- It is incremental, moving from easier forms to harder forms. The level of challenge is appropriate for students as they mature with the program.
- It uses “living” stories, from ancient to modern, and is not stuck in any particular time period. Rather, it follows a timeline of history so that the stories can be integrated with history lessons.
- Its stories engage the imagination and also spark a desire in young people to imitate them. By giving students a model from which to write, *Writing & Rhetoric* avoids the “blank-page syndrome” that can paralyze many nascent writers.
- It promotes virtue by lifting up clear-cut examples of good and bad character.
- It fosters the joy of learning by providing opportunities for creative self-expression as well as classroom fun.
- It uses speaking to enhance the development of persuasive writing.
- It teaches students to recognize and use the three persuasive appeals to an audience: pathos, ethos, and logos.
- It provides opportunities for students to learn from other students’ work as well as to present their own work.
- And now, in this volume, it instructs students to use the five canons of classic rhetoric—*invention, arrangement, style, memorization, and delivery*—for composing a speech. It also explores the three branches of oration: judicial, ceremonial, and political.

As educators, I think we need to admit that teaching writing is difficult. This is because writing makes big demands on cognitive function and, for many young writers, can easily become overwhelming. Our brains need to simultaneously

- utilize motor skills
- process vocabulary
- sequence and organize ideas
- employ grammatical concepts
- and draw upon a reservoir of good writing—hopefully the reservoir exists—as a template for new writing

That’s a tall order. Also, writing contains a subjective element. It’s not as clear-cut as math. And when you add argumentation to the mix, you have a very complex process indeed. To be properly educated, every person needs to be able to make and understand arguments.

It is from this list of complexities that a desire for a relatively easy-to-implement curriculum was born. While the task of teaching writing is difficult, it is my sincere belief that reconnecting the tree of modern composition to its classical roots in rhetoric will refresh the entire process. Regardless of your personal writing history, I trust that these books will provide a happy and rewarding experience for your students.



The *Progym* and the Practice of Modern Writing

Although the *progym* are an ancient method of approaching writing and public speaking, they are extraordinarily relevant today. This is because modern composition and oration developed from the *progym*. Modern writing borrows heavily from many of the *progym*'s various exercises. For example, modern stories are essentially unchanged from the ancient fable and narrative forms. Modern expository essays contain elements from the ancient commonplace, encomium/vituperation, and other *progym* exercises. Persuasive essays of today are basically the same as the ancient thesis exercises, although often (unfortunately) missing the robust challenge of antithesis. In this series, you can expect your students to grow in all forms of modern composition—narrative, expository, descriptive, and persuasive—while at the same time developing unique rhetorical muscle.

The *progym* cover many elements of a standard English and Language Arts curriculum. In *Thesis Part 2* these include:¹

- experiencing both the reading of speeches (sight) and listening to them (hearing)
- identifying a variety of genres—in this book, especially judicial, ceremonial, and political oration
- engaging in a range of collaborative discussions (e.g., one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) on grade-appropriate topics, texts, and issues; building on others' ideas; and expressing personal ideas clearly
- presenting claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details
- using appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation
- writing routinely over a variety of time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences
- analyzing text that is organized in sequential or chronological order
- demonstrating an understanding of texts by annotating, summarizing, and paraphrasing in ways that maintain meaning and logical order within a text
- gathering relevant information from multiple sources, and annotating sources
- drawing evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research
- articulating an understanding of ideas or images communicated by the literary work
- establishing a central idea or topic
- composing a topic sentence and creating an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped into coherent paragraphs to support the writer's purpose
- supporting claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources, facts, and details

1. This list was derived from the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 19, Part II, Chapter 110: Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts and Reading (<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter110/index.html>), the Core Knowledge Foundation's Core Knowledge Sequence: Content and Skill Guidelines for Grades K–8 (http://www.coreknowledge.org/mimik/mimik_uploads/documents/480/CKFSequence_Rev.pdf), the English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/elacontentstnds.pdf>), the English Language Arts Standards of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>), the English/Language Arts Standards Grades 6 & 8, Indiana Department of Education (<http://www.doe.in.gov/standards/englishlanguage-arts>), and the English Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools, Grade 7 (http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/2010/stds_all_english.pdf).

- writing informative (explanatory) and descriptive texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly
- developing the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples
- providing a concluding statement or section that follows from the topic presented
- using precise language and domain-specific vocabulary
- using appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts
- producing clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience
- avoiding plagiarism through summary
- with some guidance and support from peers and adults, developing and strengthening writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach
- using technology as an aid to revision and oration
- using pictures and photos to analyze and interpret the past
- participating civilly and productively in group discussions

While these standards are certainly worthwhile and are addressed in this curriculum, the *progym* derive their real strength from the incremental and thorough development of each form of writing. The Writing & Rhetoric series does not skip from form to form and leave the others behind. Rather, it builds a solid foundation of mastery by blending the forms. For example, no expository essay can truly be effective without description. No persuasive essay can be convincing without narrative. All good narrative writing requires description, and all good persuasive writing requires expository elements. Not only do the *progym* demand strong organization and implement many of the elements of modern language arts, but they also retain all of the power of classical rhetoric.

Here is how the *progym* develop each stage of modern composition:

1. Fable—narrative
2. Narrative—narrative with descriptive elements
3. Chreia & Proverb—expository essay with narrative, descriptive, and persuasive elements
4. Refutation & Confirmation—persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, and expository elements
5. Commonplace—persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, and expository elements
6. Encomium & Vituperation—persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, and expository elements
7. Comparison—comparative essay with narrative, descriptive, and expository elements
8. Description & Impersonation—descriptive essay with narrative, expository, persuasive, and comparative elements
9. Thesis Part 1—persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, expository, and comparative elements
10. Thesis Part 2—persuasive speech with narrative, descriptive, expository, and comparative elements, composed using the five canons of rhetoric as well as the three rhetorical appeals
11. Declamation—persuasive essay or speech that marshals all the elements of the *progym* and brings them to bear upon judicial matters

As you can see, the *progym* move quickly to establish the importance of one form to another.

Objectives for *Thesis Part 2*

The following are some of the major objectives for the exercises found in each section of this book:

Reading

1. Expose students to examples of judicial, ceremonial, and political rhetoric.
2. Practice fluent reading using diverse speech texts.
3. Aid student reading and recall by teaching techniques for annotation.
4. Facilitate student interaction with well-written texts through discussions and exercises in evaluation and critical thinking.

Writing

1. Enhance research skills by giving students multiple texts to read and having them summarize and create a topic from the material.
2. Support the development of invention (inventing topics and ideas to write about).
3. Continue the development of audience awareness, especially of the types and needs of audiences.
4. Grow awareness of the stylistic virtues of correctness, clarity, vivid description, propriety, and elegance.
5. Use speech “hooks” to help capture audience attention.
6. Encourage students to map (pre-write) their information before they write a paragraph.
7. Support students in writing persuasive speeches in the style of a closing argument in a courtroom, a eulogy in a funeral, and the proposal of a law in a legislative body. These speeches include the development of an awareness of transitions, tone, and writing style.
8. Practice writing theses, topic sentences, and antitheses.
9. Improve conclusions so that they extend and enhance the original thesis.
10. Strengthen the skill of deriving information from texts and organizing and summarizing it in expository paragraphs.
11. Continue the development of revision, proofreading, and joint critiquing.
12. Reinforce grammatical concepts.

Related Concepts

1. Aid in the development of vocabulary and analysis of language.
2. Strengthen students’ power of observation.
3. Reinforce the ability to summarize and paraphrase for greater rhetorical flexibility.
4. Strengthen working memory through mnemonic techniques, thus improving storage of information and rhetorical power.

Speaking

1. Strengthen students’ oratory skills by providing opportunities for public speaking and for working on delivery—volume, pacing, gestures, and inflection.
2. Encourage students to see the relationship between writing and speaking as they consider their ideas orally and to use oration as an aid to the process of revision.

Introduction to Students

Have you ever wanted to be that guy or that gal who could stand up in a crowd and deliver the perfect speech, the perfect toast, the perfect witticism at precisely the perfect time?

Embedded in a castle wall in Ireland, high above the ground, is a chunk of stone that supposedly gives great eloquence to anyone intrepid enough to kiss it. Pilgrims must grasp iron bars and lean out backwards over the parapet to plant their lips on the Blarney Stone. Before the iron bars were installed, assistants were needed to grasp the ankles and legs of pilgrims to keep them from plunging to their deaths. Many of the “kissers” returned home from Blarney Castle more confident in their ability to recite, to orate, and to woo their beloved. As the old song goes:

Oh, did you ne'er hear of the Blarney,
'Tis found near the banks of Killarney,
Believe it from me, no girl's heart is free,
Once she hears the sweet sound of the Blarney.²

While kissing the Blarney Stone might confer eloquence in some magical world, I must sadly disabuse you of the notion that eloquence can be gotten easily in the real world. Nothing worth doing ever comes easily. Not painting a landscape. Not building a house. Not running a marathon. Not learning to write and speak well.

“But wait,” you may say. “At least with writing, almost everyone can do it.” And that’s true. Almost every educated person can write. It does not follow that writing well is common. Good writers must first be good readers: reading deeply and widely of the great writers both past and present. They must master the simple sentence, then the complex sentence, then the paragraph, then paragraph organization, then storytelling, then descriptive writing, then expository (explanatory) writing, and finally persuasive writing. They must practice thinking rhetorically, which is the metacognitive³ process of thinking about the process of writing: its purpose, its audience, its style, its logic, its credibility, its emotion. Finally, writing well takes rewriting, and sometimes many drafts are necessary to get a composition just right.

On top of composition, add in oration—the delivery of a speech. A good orator must practice delivering a speech, which is similar to the process of rewriting. A good orator must consider volume, pacing, clarity, inflection, gestures, posture, and eye contact.

Because so much goes into writing well and speaking well, rhetoric must be the study of many years. You can no more be a proficient writer or orator without practice than you can be a skilled pianist or basketball player. And so, dear student, my encouragement to you is to embrace the hard work that is before you, to make hard work your meat and drink, your bedfellow, your friend. These ancient exercises—the *progymnasmata*—take time and concentration and energy, but they will also improve your eloquence in the real world.

Embrace the words of President Theodore Roosevelt: “I wish to preach, not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife; to

2. John Brougham, “The Blarney Stone,” in *The Bunsby Papers: Irish Echoes* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1856; Project Gutenberg, 2012), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/41317/41317-h/41317-h.htm>.

3. Metacognition is thinking about the process of thinking. In order to become more disciplined thinkers, we must analyze how we think.

preach that highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph. . . . It is hard to fail, but it is worse to never have tried to succeed. In this life we get nothing save by effort.”⁴ You will find that this effort will pay off in oh-so-many ways. The doors of deep thought and opportunity will open to you as you acquire new powers of communication. And, yes, you will more than likely become that guy or that gal who can deliver a speech, toast, or witticism, if not perfectly, then with confidence and panache.

So now, what are you waiting for? Turn to lesson 1 and let’s get cracking!

4. Theodore Roosevelt, “The Strenuous Life” (speech), Hamilton Club, April 10, 1899, Chicago, Illinois, Theodore Roosevelt Association, transcript, https://theodoreroosevelt.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=991271&module_id=339361.

Teaching Thesis Part 2

In this eleventh book of the Writing & Rhetoric series, your students will be composing persuasive speeches using the ancient rules that give classic rhetoric its formidable strength and staying power. These rules (or canons) include methods of brainstorming ideas and marshaling evidence, standards of outlining and composition, and techniques of memorization and speaking that have never been surpassed from the days of their theoretical fathers—roughly 1,900 years after Quintilian and 2,500 years after Aristotle. Students will continue the development of thesis writing from previous volumes in this series, but their work here will focus on the three traditional branches of oration: judicial, ceremonial, and political. These three branches cover the major kinds of formal speeches in the public interest. Each of these speeches begins as a written composition using the thesis as its guiding light.

The thesis essay is the most important form of academic writing. Any student who hopes to succeed in college must learn to write it well. In a respected publication by Harvard University, the author lists the fundamentals for academic writing, and many of these fundamentals are found in the thesis essay: the thesis itself, evidence, analysis, structure (or arrangement), counterargument, sources, and reflection.¹ Thus, even schools and students who have not yet worked with the *progymnasmata* will still greatly benefit from doing the exercises in this book.

In addition to academic writing, the thesis essay will help students to examine and sustain ideas, skills much needed to raise the level of discourse in today's public conversations. We live in a time of pernicious sound bites, memes, and partisan news, but what is necessary for the flourishing of a republic is an informed citizenry capable of engaging in rational and civil discussions. The principles of rhetoric that helped build the Roman republic for over 400 years are still valuable—no, vital—for citizens of the American republic today.

The ancient authors of the *progymnasmata* (Graeco-Roman manuals of composition) certainly saw the value of thesis writing and made it one of the culminating exercises of the program. Nicolaus the Sophist² told us that thesis includes all the parts of a classic oration: the introduction, the confirmations, the antitheses, the refutations (solutions), and the conclusion (epilogue).³ We would add that writing and speaking persuasively has myriad uses, from requesting a raise at work to pleading for the release of a prisoner of conscience.⁴

Modern persuasive essays and speeches are inspired by the thesis exercise found in the ancient *progymnasmata*. The rhetorician Aphthonius told us that “thesis is a logical examination of any matter under inspection.”⁵ These investigations would involve general topics in answer to speculative questions, such as: Should people marry? Should people sail? Should a city be surrounded by walls? In this book, students will respond to speculative questions, such as: Is the defendant innocent or guilty? Is a particular person worthy or unworthy of honor? Is a specific law beneficial or harmful?

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1. Gordon Harvey, “A Brief Guide to the Elements of the Academic Essay,” Harvard Writing Project Brief Guide Series (Harvard College Writing Program, 2009), https://writingproject.fas.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/hwp_brief_guides_elements.pdf.
 2. Nicolaus the Sophist lived in the fifth century AD and was the last of the writers of the existing *progymnasmata*. Although sophists have a bad reputation today as artful deceivers, they were the philosophers who developed rhetoric and were often very sincere teachers, not practicing deception at all. The word “sophist” (wise one) is related to the word “philosopher” (lover of wisdom).
 3. George A. Kennedy, trans., *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 170.
 4. prisoner of conscience: someone imprisoned for his religious or political views
 5. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 120.

In a thesis speech, the speaker argues for a logical position and, at the same time, includes counterarguments so that the opposition has a chance to be heard. The writer essentially articulates the opposition's rebuttals and then disproves them with fresh arguments. These tertiary arguments are known as refutations. While the speaker must certainly defend her position, the fact that she must consider other positions makes the thesis speech a genuine exploration and thought experiment. This exploration is of great and lasting value for students. It forces them to consider: "Do I really believe what I'm saying? Have I provided enough evidence to convince myself and others? Am I expressing myself in a credible manner?"

In writing thesis speeches, students take another step forward toward the goal of mastering rhetoric. The famous speeches and informative articles herein will serve as a foundation of pleasure and instruction. Students will use the content of the readings as models for their own forays into judicial, ceremonial, and political speech writing. They will continue working with topic sentences, and they will expand the meaning of those sentences through evidence, quotations, and explanation. In other words, all the basics are in place for creating an ethos, pathos, and logos based on careful reasoning, compelling illustrations, and reliable sources. By looking more deeply into texts, students will extend their dialogic (conversational) relationship with reading. The kinds of questions asked in the exercises in this book will lead students to consider the readings in the context of their lives and the world about them.

Unpacking *Thesis Part 2*

You will find nearly every lesson organized around foundational principles and inspiring selections from great writing. Narration, questions for discussion, and exercises in speech writing all emerge within the context of these principles and reading selections. We find that contextualization helps to reinforce memory and the laddering of skills.

This book is divided into two portions:

Lessons 1 to 4—Using the canons of rhetoric—invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery—the first portion develops the vital aspects of speech writing.

Lessons 5 to 10—The second portion guides students through the three branches of rhetoric: judicial, ceremonial, and political. Students will have the opportunity to write a speech in each of these major genres.

To stretch and strengthen the process of writing and speaking, both portions of this book contain special features, such as Write & Discuss, Go Deeper, Planning Time, Writing Time, Revise It, and Speak It. These sections are explained in the following paragraphs.

The Lesson Readings

Every lesson contains excerpts from various sources: articles, essays, and speeches, to name a few. The Writing & Rhetoric series uses readings that are culturally significant and that contain lasting insights. In making our selections, we seek to apply the admonition of educator Charlotte Mason: "The intellectual life . . . has but one food whereby it lives and grows—the sustenance of living ideas."⁶ We choose readings that contain "living ideas"—i.e., ideas that encourage the intellectual development of young people by being challenging and important.

6. Charlotte Mason, *School Education*, AmblesideOnline, accessed January 24, 2019, <https://amblesideonline.org/CM/vol3complete.html>.

Because we believe there is distinct value in having students hear examples of good rhetoric in addition to reading them, at the back of the book we have provided a list of resources for audio versions of some of the selections.

Tell It Back

With the exception of lessons 6, 8 and 10, students will practice narrating the chapter lesson back, either orally or in writing. Multiple intelligences—memory, sequence, main idea—are developed by this practice. In addition to exercising their executive functions, students will continue to internalize an outline of the material. Some educational models have based their entire strategy on the important skill of narration.

Talk About It and Speak It

Talk About It appears in lessons 1–5, 7, and 9; Speak It appears in lessons 6, 8, and 10. These two sections promote our conviction that writing, speaking, and thinking are critical skills that work together. Some educators believe that difficulties with writing stem from a lack of deeper thought. These books use comprehension, reading aloud, discussion, and oral delivery as ways to help students become critical thinkers according to the way their bodies (and brains) are made. These three abilities—thinking, speaking, and writing—enlarge each other when practiced together. Moreover, the Speak It section employs the full range of elocutionary skill, from volume and pacing to inflection and gestures. Memory techniques are encouraged as a way to support a strong delivery and to reduce performance anxiety.

Write & Discuss

While students anticipate writing their thesis speeches, Write & Discuss (lessons 1–5, 7, 9) keeps their writing and persuasive skills active. This section invites students to respond to thought-provoking readings or ideas by writing down their thoughts prior to a class discussion. Writing sets up students for a more rigorous and engaged discussion. It gives them time to reflect on the reading or idea and to know their thoughts better. As Flannery O'Connor said, "I write because I don't know what I think until I read what I say." The principle of writing in order to know what we think is the main purpose of Write & Discuss. When students have their ideas tangibly spelled out on a piece of paper, it is easier for them to courageously engage in a challenging conversation.

Go Deeper

This section, found in lessons 1–5, 7, and 9, seeks to deepen comprehension of the skills taught in those particular lessons. Students will variously examine the five canons of rhetoric, prewriting, thesis writing, mnemonics, annotation, titling, topic sentences, and rhetorical appeals.

Planning Time and Writing Time

These aspects of the book, found in lessons 6, 8, and 10, are the most obvious for a writing curriculum. Each Planning Time section walks students through necessary preparation for writing speeches and includes choosing a speech topic, research and annotation, prewriting, thesis invention, and arrangement. Each Writing Time section features an opportunity to write a persuasive speech from scratch. These speeches include an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Practice in this section examines the virtues of style, takes students step by step through the various speech paragraphs, and places emphasis on rhetorical devices. Each speech follows clear writing prompts, and the principle of imitation is always at work.

The thesis speech follows a clear—and ancient—outline. It starts with an introduction that grabs audience attention with a hook and then states and explains the speech’s main argument or thesis. The next two paragraphs confirm (support) the thesis with sound reasoning and backing from textual sources. The next paragraph considers a counterargument to the thesis (antithesis) and refutes it, also with sound reasoning and textual support. Finally, a conclusion wraps up the speech by expanding on the original thesis.

Revise It

In this book, students will continue to critically analyze their own writing. The Revise It section (lessons 6, 8, 10) offers students the opportunity to improve their writing, and the writing of others, by strengthening phrasing, finding grammar errors, and proofreading.

Historical Note

The material covered in much of the Writing & Rhetoric series is loosely tied to periods in history. *Fable* and *Narrative I* borrow their stories from Greek and early Roman times. *Narrative II* picks up with the late Roman Empire, while *Chreia & Proverb* continues into the Middle Ages. *Refutation & Confirmation* moves into the experience of colonial America. In *Commonplace*, students read selected writings from late colonial America, the American Revolution, and the Federalist period. *Encomium & Vituperation* covers many colorful personalities from the Civil War era to that of the Wild West. *Comparison* covers the part of American history from the Gilded Age to the Great Depression. *Description & Impersonation* focuses primarily on twentieth-century writers, including two figures from the world wars. The purpose of this progression is to provide rich content that helps timeline-based schools integrate history with the language arts. As one discipline reinforces the other, students will retain a powerful impression of the periods of history they study.

The two thesis volumes, *Thesis Part 1* and *Thesis Part 2*, begin a new effort to synthesize the ancient and the modern, using readings that span the course of history.

Important Notes

Flexibility is built into the program.

We have crafted this book to be useful to students at different levels with different needs. For instance, teachers can ask their students to complete some exercises verbally instead of in writing. If, on the other hand, teachers desire more written work, they can ask students to respond to Talk About It questions in writing. Teachers can also have students work together to tackle parts of lessons that are difficult. Education is personal, and one size does not fit all. Please use your judgment to determine what is best for your student(s) in terms of discipline and delight.



Review summary instructions.

This icon directs students to a section of the book with some pointers on how to summarize. Here, students will learn how to shorten a lengthy paragraph into a much more succinct form. To be brief is to use words wisely. It is a way to communicate important information to the audience while showing concern for its needs (and its attention span).



Practice a rhetorical device.

Important rhetorical devices are reviewed in this book. The formal study of rhetoric collects and draws upon these devices throughout a student’s life as a writer and a speaker. We wanted

to make special note of these to help you track the growing number of “tools” in your students’ rhetorical “toolbox.”



Begin prewriting.

This icon indicates that students will be doing prewriting exercises, including using lists, cluster diagrams, and the technique of freewriting.



Include elocution instruction.

This icon indicates that elocution instruction should be included with the exercise and guides you to a section of the book that provides full elocution instructions. We believe that speaking well makes students better writers and that writing well makes for better speakers. In this book, we focus on the importance of speaking well to better connect with the audience. Your students should practice one aspect of elocution every time they do public speaking.



Use a recording device.

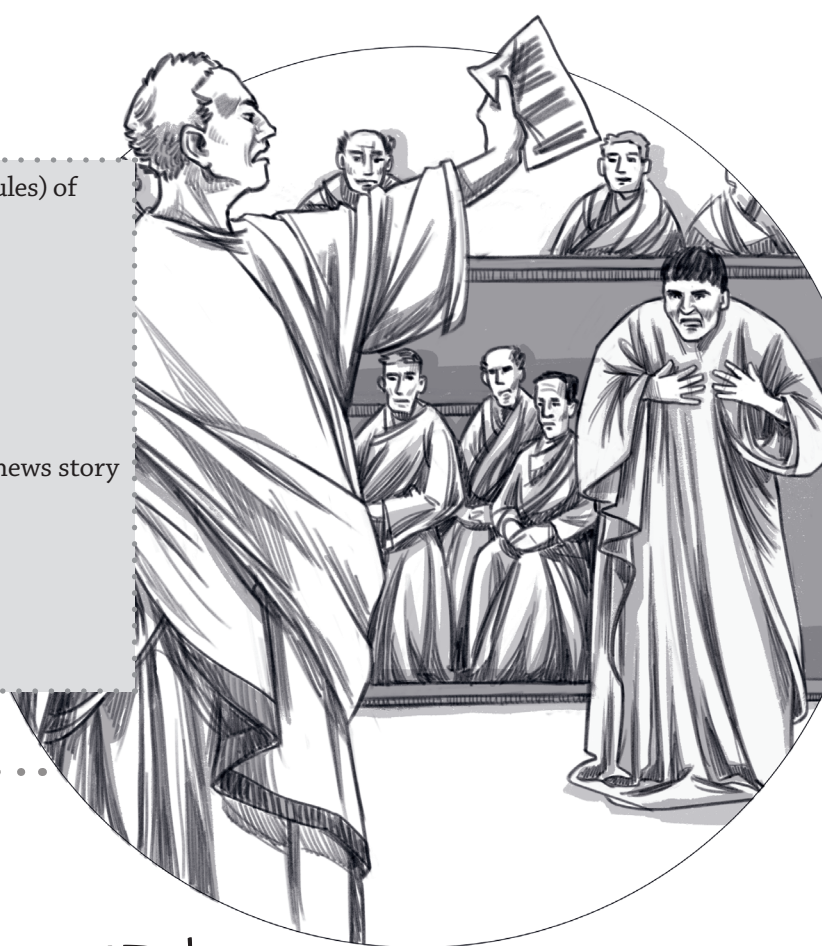
This icon indicates places where students may find it useful to employ a recording device. When practicing the canon of memory, recordings can be used to aid in memorization. In addition, depending on the size of the class and the availability of technology, you may want to have your student(s) record their work from the Speak It or the Revise It sections and play it back. This is an excellent way for them to hear the words and the qualities of their performances. They will learn elocution faster if they hear themselves as well as each other.

Best wishes as you embark upon these new and fascinating exercises with your students!

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the five canons (or rules) of rhetoric as formulated by Marcus Tullius Cicero.

In this lesson, students will practice:

- oral narration in summary form
- critical thinking
- oral analysis of a painting
- written reflection and follow-up discussion
- writing arguments and counterarguments drawn from a news story
- rearranging paragraphs for the greatest effect
- rewriting for clarity and simplicity
- rewriting sentences to be more formal or informal
- using cue cards as memory aids
- delivering a speech with different inflections of the voice



Lesson 1

The Five Canons of Rhetoric

If you knew something catastrophic was going to happen to your nation and you had only one chance to warn people, what would you say? How would you organize your thoughts? How would you decide what words to use? How would you deliver your speech so that people would act immediately?

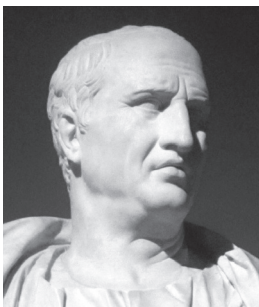


Image courtesy of Freud via Wikimedia Commons.

This was the problem faced by Marcus Tullius Cicero, a Roman leader in the first century BC. In the year 63 BC, Cicero discovered a plot to overthrow the Roman Republic and replace the representative government with a dictatorship. The leader of the conspiracy was a popular military commander and politician named Catiline. Quite the troublemaker, Catiline was already known for killing and cutting off the head of an enemy, and for parading the head down the streets of Rome. He also was suspected of having committed adultery with a Vestal Virgin, which was considered blasphemy against the goddess Vesta. Even so, Catiline belonged to a famous family in Rome and was protected by his wealthy, well-connected friends. When Cicero heard of the plot, he knew that he needed to go before the Roman Senate to deal Catiline a knockout blow. Cicero knew that if he failed to convince his listeners, Catiline planned to murder many of the senators with a secret army he was gathering.

Word Roots

“Rhetoric” is derived from a Greek word (*rhetor*) meaning “speaker” or “orator.”

The Roman teacher Quintilian said that rhetoric is the act of a good man speaking well.¹ Francis Bacon, a Renaissance philosopher, expanded on this idea when he said, “The duty and office of rhetoric is to apply reason to imagination for the better moving of the will.”²

Cicero was trained in the art of persuasive writing and speech, which we call rhetoric. Along with most upstanding Romans, he believed that rhetoric was only to be used for the good of society. It was a power reserved for moral people to lead others toward rightful thinking. As a master speaker, he enlisted the five rules (or canons) of rhetoric to prepare his speech to the Senate. He took the following steps:

- **Invention**—He brainstormed the most important ideas that he needed to share.
- **Arrangement**—He considered the best way to organize his ideas.
- **Style**—He chose his words, and the manner in which he wanted to express them, carefully, to appeal most effectively to his audience.
- **Memory**—He memorized his speech, or at least practiced it over and over, so that he could take his eyes off of his notes³ to make eye contact with the senators and use gestures.
- **Delivery**—He pondered how to use gestures and his voice to be most convincing: when to speak loudly, when to speak softly, when to speak quickly, when to slow down, and when to intensify his voice with urgency.

These five rules are the essential steps to take when writing any kind of speech.

Cicero launched his verbal attack against Catiline with a series of questions designed to hook his audience. He spoke boldly to the traitor, who was seated in the Senate that day.

When, O Catiline, do you mean to cease abusing our patience? How long is that madness of yours still to mock us? When is there to be an end of that unbridled audacity of yours, swaggering about as it does now? Do not the nightly guards placed on the Palatine Hill—do not the watches posted throughout the city—does not the alarm of all good people—does not the precaution taken of assembling the senate in this most defensible place—do not the bold looks and suspicious faces of the senators here present, have any effect upon you? Don’t you feel that your plans are detected? Do you not see that your conspiracy is already arrested and rendered powerless by the knowledge which everyone here possesses of it? What is there that you did last night? What about the night before? Where is it that you were? Who was there that you summoned to meet you? What scheme was adopted by you that you assume we know nothing about?⁴

1. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, trans. Harold Edgeworth Butler (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1920–1922), 12.1.1, Lacus Curtius, accessed September 10, 2019, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Quintilian/Institutio_Oratoria/home.html.

2. Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (Adelaide: University of Adelaide, 2014), 2.18.

3. More than likely Cicero did not use notes per se, but if he did, he probably wrote on a wax tablet rather than on papyrus paper. Wax was used as a temporary medium.

4. Adapted from Cicero, “Against Catiline,” in *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, trans. C.D. Yonge (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1856), 1.1.1, Perseus Digital Library, Tufts University, accessed August 22, 2019, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Cic.+Catil.+1>.

Notice how Cicero spoke as if the whole Senate—indeed, all of Rome—knew about the plot. He wanted to unite the senators against Catiline, and he did this by speaking as if they were all in on the secret. Any senator who didn't know what was going on might feel too stupid to speak up and risk showing his ignorance. Cicero's attack also made it hard for Catiline to respond. If the man got angry, he might look like a hothead. If he protested that he was innocent, he might look guilty by protesting too much. Catiline was in a bad spot.

Cicero didn't stop there. He criticized the Senate and himself (as consul, the commander in chief of the Roman Republic) for their lack of action against the conspirator. He wanted everyone in the room to feel responsible for sitting idly by and allowing Catiline to hatch his plot.

The senate is aware of these things—the consul sees them—and yet this man lives! Lives! aye, he dares to come even into the senate. He takes part in the public deliberations. He is watching and marking down and checking off for slaughter every individual among us. And we, gallant men that we are, think that we are doing our duty to the republic if we keep out of the way of his frenzied attacks.⁵

Cicero used this criticism as a transition from his hook to his key point. And now we come to it—the reason for the speech. Indeed, the reason for any speech can be found in its thesis statement. The thesis statement in a persuasive oration is the main argument of the speech. Cicero didn't hesitate to make it clear where his speech was going, and he thundered again at Catiline.

Argument

An argument is a clear line of thinking aimed at proving a point. Arguments are introduced in the form of a statement and express an idea and an opinion. The following are some famous examples of the main idea of an argument. Keep in mind that arguments aren't complete without explanations and support.

- The unexamined life is not worth living. —Socrates, from *Apology* by Plato
- The superior man is modest in his speech but excels in his actions. —Confucius, *Analects*
- It is better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all. —Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “In Memorium A.H.H.”
- Science provides an understanding of a universal experience, and art provides a universal understanding of a personal experience. —Mae Jemison, “Teach Arts and Sciences Together”⁶



5. Adapted from Cicero, “Against Catiline,” 1.1.2.

6. Mae Jemison, “Teach Arts and Sciences Together” (speech), TED Conference, February 2002, Monterey, CA, TED, transcript and TED video, 21:18, https://www.ted.com/talks/mae_jemison_on_teaching_arts_and_sciences_together/transcript.

^ACicero's full speech can be found in a number of online sources, including Tufts University's Perseus Digital Library (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Cic.+Catil.+1>) and Bartleby.com (<https://www.bartleby.com/268/2/11.html>).

O Catiline, for the destruction which you have been plotting against us, you should have been led to execution long ago, and by the command of the consul.⁷

Even though he spoke directly to Catiline, Cicero was really speaking to the rest of the Senate. He clearly hoped to convince his listeners that Catiline must be punished with exile or death. As consul, Cicero was arguing for the power to punish Catiline's treason. In a more typical thesis-paper form, his argument might go like this:

Before a traitor can inflict destruction on his people, a leader must dole out the ultimate punishment—death.⁸

Cicero followed his thesis with a catalogue of Catiline's crimes, marshalling evidence against him and using vituperation. His powerful speech left his opponent nearly speechless.^A Supposedly Catiline fled from the Senate House muttering curses and threats, and he joined his army of disgruntled soldiers in the hills near Florence, Italy. An army loyal to the Roman Republic met Catiline's troops at Pistoia, Italy, and defeated and killed the traitor. Thus ended the Catiline conspiracy.

As for Cicero, he was now considered the savior and protector of his nation, not to mention the greatest orator of the Roman Republic. He was the undisputed master of speech writing and delivery. In fact, he wrote the book on it! From his study of famous speeches, Cicero wrote his classic of rhetoric, *On Oratory and Orators*. This book is the original source of the five canons of rhetoric: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Here is how Cicero explained them:

All the business and art of an orator is divided into five parts. He ought

- first to find out what he should say (invention)
- next, to dispose and arrange his subject, not only in a certain order, but with a sort of power and judgment (arrangement)
- then to clothe and deck his thoughts with language (style)
- then to secure them in his memory (memory)
- and lastly, to deliver them with dignity and grace (delivery).⁹

Today these steps may seem obvious. Writing instructors nowadays call invention “prewriting” or “brainstorming,” and arrangement is called “outlining.” Back in the ancient days of Rome, however, this five-part theory was something new and eye-opening. The respected Roman educator Quintilian said, “It was Cicero who shed the greatest light not only on the practice but on the theory of oratory; for he stands alone among Romans as combining the gift of actual eloquence

7. Adapted from Cicero, “Against Catiline,” 1.1.2.

8. You can surely see how such a statement could be abused, especially in an authoritarian government. We will tackle this problem in the Write & Discuss section of this lesson.

9. Adapted from J.S. Watson, ed. and trans., *Cicero on Oratory and Orators* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1860), 40, <https://archive.org/details/ciceroonoratoryo00cice/page/n7>.

with that of teaching the art.”¹⁰ He added that “for posterity the name of Cicero has come to be regarded not as the name of a man, but as the name of eloquence itself.”¹¹

For the debt that Rome owed Cicero for teaching rhetoric and supporting representative government, you would think he earned a happy retirement. But twenty years after the Catiline crisis, Cicero used his eloquence to speak out against the rising power of Mark Antony. Angry about being called “the cause of war, the cause of mischief, the cause of ruin,”¹² Antony sent killers after Cicero. Not only did they whack off his head, but they also cut off his right hand—the hand of the greatest writer of his generation—to show that his rhetorical skill had died. The head went on display in Rome, where Antony’s wife, Fulvia, stuck her hairpin in Cicero’s dead tongue. It was her way of getting revenge on the man who spoke with such eloquence against power-hungry men such as Antony.



In spite of this last indignity, Cicero’s memory lives on. And because of him, you now know what to do if you need to warn your nation about something catastrophic. For that matter, you know what to do if you must deliver any kind of speech. You must speak up with the help of the five canons of rhetoric: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. It is not enough to just know about the five canons, however. To become truly persuasive, you need to practice them—and have lots of patience besides!



10. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 3.1.20.

11. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 10.1.1.

12. Cicero, “The Second Oration against Mark Antony,” *The World’s Famous Orations*, ed. William Jennings Bryan and Francis W. Halsey, in vol. 2, *Rome (218 BC–84 AD)* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906; Bartleby.com, 2003), para. 20, <https://www.bartleby.com/268/2/15.html>. This is an example of a rhetorical device known as the Rule of Three, or tricolon. This device uses three repeated elements (such as words, phrases, clauses, sentences, sections, or plots) that often are parallel in structure for the purpose of delight or emphasis or to make writing flow more smoothly.

Tell It Back—Summary



This icon points to more tips on summarizing at the back of the book.

1. Summarize aloud three or four of the most important ideas about rhetoric in this lesson. Then, in the space provided, write one well-crafted sentence that tells the main idea of the lesson as best as you understand it.

Main idea:

Sample important ideas:

- The five canons of rhetoric are invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery.
- Rhetoric can be used to battle power-hungry men.
- The thesis statement in a persuasive essay or speech is its main argument.

Sample main idea 1: The five canons of rhetoric are useful rules to observe when writing any sort of speech.

Sample main idea 2: In life, we may face crucial moments that demand the ability to speak persuasively.

TE

2. Briefly explain each of the five canons or rules of rhetoric.

Talk About It—

TE

1. It is necessary to consider all of the five canons of rhetoric when writing a speech. Which canon might you find the most challenging to take on, and why?

TE

2. Rhetoric can be used for good purposes or for bad. It falls to each one of us to recognize when rhetoric is used harmfully. In the following Filipino tale, rhetoric is used for a bad purpose by the naughty character of Lamiran the Squirrel. Read the tale and then explain how Lamiran used invention, arrangement, style, and delivery.

Auac and Lamiran

—adapted from a traditional Filipino tale

Once Auac, a hawk, stole a salted fish which was hanging in the sun to dry. He flew with it to a branch of a camanchile-tree, where he sat down and began to eat. As he was eating, Lamiran, a squirrel who had his house in a hole at the foot of the tree, saw Auac. At once, Lamiran set his wits to work to discover some way of getting the fish. He looked up, and said, “What beautiful shiny black feathers you have, Auac!”

When he heard this praise, the hawk looked very dignified. Nevertheless, he was much pleased. He fluttered his wings.

“You are especially beautiful, Auac, when you walk; for you are very graceful,” continued the squirrel. Auac, who did not understand the trick that was being played on him, hopped along the branch with the air of a king.

“I heard someone say yesterday that your voice is so soft and sweet that everyone who listens to your song is charmed. Please let me hear some of your notes, you handsome Auac!” said the cunning Lamiran.

Auac, feeling prouder and more dignified than ever, opened his mouth and sang, “Uac-uac-uac-uac!” As he uttered his notes, the fish in his beak fell to the ground, and Lamiran got it!¹³

TE

3. Carefully examine the image of the painting *Allegory of Rhetoric* by Baroque painter Artemisia Gentileschi. Notice that the female figure has a pen in her right hand and a dagger in her left. In art from the Middle Ages, the allegorical figure of Rhetoric is often wielding a sword. If rhetoric is defined as “the art of persuasive writing and speech,” why do you think Rhetoric is portrayed with a sword in hand?



Allegory

An **allegory** is the representation of an abstract idea in a story or work of art. For example, the abstract idea of liberty is embodied in the Statue of Liberty. Humanity’s quest for truth is portrayed in Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave.” The spiritual journeys of an individual man and woman are represented in the two parts of Paul Bunyan’s allegory *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. The statue of the Charging Bull near Wall Street in New York City represents risk and reward.

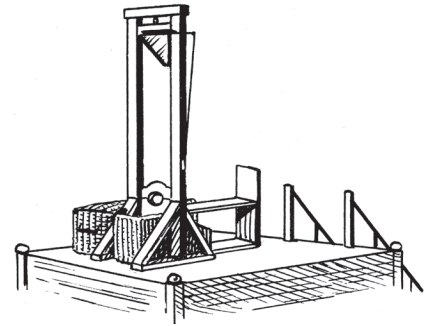
Write & Discuss—

As a class, choose one of the following subjects to write about and discuss. Keep in mind that the writing in this section is not like the writing of a formal paper. Jot down your thoughts in complete sentences, but don’t be overly concerned about organizing them or making them sound polished.

13. Adapted from “Auac and Lamiran,” in *Filipino Popular Tales*, ed. Dean S. Fansler (Lancaster, PA: The American Folk-Lore Society, 1921), 395–96, <https://books.google.com/books?id=guAZAAAAMAAJ&printsec=titlepage>.

1. Cicero’s powerful attack on Catiline in front of the Roman Senate succeeded in exposing a plot by a tyrant to seize control of the Roman Republic. Other scenes similar to Cicero’s speech on the Senate floor have been repeated throughout history, but not all have had such noble purposes. Consider the following two examples:

- In 1794, Maximilien Robespierre stood up before the National Convention of France to denounce traitors to the French Revolution. Robespierre was already responsible for sending hundreds of his enemies to the guillotine during the Reign of Terror, but he wasn’t done yet—some of his fellow revolutionaries still opposed him. When he took to the floor, he denounced anyone who dared to call him a tyrant. He then implied that a conspiracy was being hatched against him and threatened that he would soon reveal the names of the conspirators. Robespierre finished his speech by saying, “I leave to the oppressors of the people a terrible testament. . . . ‘Thou shalt die!’”¹⁴ Rather than exposing a real conspiracy, however, Robespierre wanted only to silence his personal enemies and critics.



- In 1979, Saddam Hussein of Iraq called together a meeting of the senior leaders of the Ba’ath political party. When all of them were gathered together in the assembly hall, Hussein ordered the secret police to lock the doors. Then he announced to the terrified gathering that there were traitors in their midst. He said, “The dreams of the conspirators are many. But be assured, I will pick up my gun and fight to the end.”¹⁵ With a video camera rolling, Hussein denounced sixty-eight people by name. Many were led out of the room by the secret police to face a firing squad without a trial. Like Robespierre, Hussein was less concerned about an actual conspiracy against his nation than a conspiracy against his personal power.

How can a public denouncement be similar to gossip and slander? What safeguards are necessary so that denouncements such as Cicero’s against Catiline are not abused by power-hungry people? Take fifteen minutes to consider these questions and, in the space provided, write a response with some specific ideas. Then discuss your answers with a partner or with your class.

14. Maximilien Robespierre, “His Last Speech,” *The World’s Famous Orations*, ed. William Jennings Bryan and Francis W. Halsey, in vol. 7, *Continental Europe (380–1906)* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906; Bartleby.com, 2003), para. 3, <https://www.bartleby.com/268/7/24.html>.
15. “Saddam’s 1979 Baath Party Purge,” aired on December 13, 2013, on BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-middle-east-25363857/saddam-s-1979-baath-party-purge>.

Sample answer: Gossip and slander are used by malicious people to harm individuals seen as rivals or enemies. A public denouncement can be like gossip and slander if it is aimed at destroying the reputation of political opponents, especially if the speech is not based on fact and evidence. Both gossipers and slanderers seek to undermine or destroy others, and a tyrannical person can use a public forum to say anything about anyone.

Neutral and unbiased judges, journalists, and detectives are necessary to investigate accusations and protect against false denouncements. This is why our courts of law require that people on trial are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Moreover, there must be penalties for anyone who spreads false rumors. Gossipers and slanderers should be exposed and pay a high price for their malicious behavior.

2. Elie Wiesel, humanitarian and Holocaust survivor, wrote about his experiences in the Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps in his book *Night*. He told this story from his childhood:

There was a man named Moishe the Beadle¹⁶ who lived in the town of Sighet in old Hungary, now Rumania. One day in 1941 the Hungarian government, controlled by the Nazis, rounded up all “foreign Jews” and sent them away on trains destined for concentration camps. Once the train carrying Moishe crossed into Poland, it was ordered to stop by the German terror police, known as the Gestapo. The passengers were forced to march into the forest and dig their own graves, after which they were mowed down by machine guns. Moishe alone escaped the massacre, suffering a bullet wound to the leg, and returned on foot to warn his people, the Jews of Sighet. Running from house to house, he said to them, “Jews, listen to me! It’s all I ask of you. No money. No pity. Just listen to me!”¹⁷ But no one would listen. No one would believe him. And who could blame them? The crimes he described were too horrible to think about. *No human being would do such a thing,*



Image courtesy of World Economic Forum via Wikimedia Commons.

16. Beadle: a caretaker of a synagogue

17. Elie Wiesel, *Night*, trans. Marion Wiesel (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 7. Copyright 1972, 1985 by Elie Wiesel.

or so the people thought. *He must have gone mad.* It was not long thereafter before all the Jews of Sighet were rounded up and sent to the Auschwitz death camp. Very few survived the horrors that awaited them there.¹⁸

The Holocaust was such a horrifying event in history that it is hard for us, even today, to look at its details without feeling traumatized. Back in the 1940s, few people knew anything about a genocide in recent memory.¹⁹ It's doubtful that even the best orator could have convinced the people of Sighet that the Nazis were so diabolical. It would be like convincing people that zombies were coming to kill them. Moishe's whole story has not been recorded, and he did the best he could in dire and appalling circumstances. Clearly, he was a heroic person for striving to save people from the coming nightmare.

Consider: If you were in this situation, how would you have alerted disbelieving people? Take fifteen minutes to reflect on this question, drawing inspiration from the five canons of rhetoric. In the space provided, write a response with some specific ideas. Then discuss your answers with a partner or with your class.

Sample answer: If I were in this situation, I would want to organize my thoughts logically so that I wouldn't get them jumbled up and sound muddled and confused. I would be careful to choose my words and plan my delivery to sound as reasonable as possible. I would probably have to restrain my intense emotions of fear and panic to keep from getting carried away by them. I would also strive to offer as much proof as I could in the form of description and by showing them my own bullet wounds. If all else failed, perhaps I would sound the alarm in a different town or village. Regardless of what I think I would do, I have never been in such an awful situation and pray that I never am.

18. Based on a story in Elie Wiesel, *Night*.

19. The word "genocide" wasn't coined until 1944. It refers to the attempt to destroy a national, ethnic, or religious group. During the twentieth century, and before the 1940s, other peoples experienced genocides, but these mass killings and purges were not recognized internationally for what they were. A new word such as "genocide" has helped us to think in new categories. Early in the twentieth century, Armenians, Greeks, and Assyrians experienced genocidal murder by the Ottoman Turks, and the Ukrainians and Kazakhs experienced a murderous famine under the Communist Soviet Union.

Go Deeper—



1. **CANON 1**—Invention: *First, find out what you should say.*

As you know, people hold a wide variety of opinions. Whether we're talking about fashion or politics, we are forever trying to persuade each other that our opinions are right. We all have opinions (or thesis statements, if you will) that we put out there with friends, neighbors, and countrymen, and we believe that the world will be a rosier place if they agree with us. But even if we fail to convince our audience or, in fact, prove to be wrongheaded in our own opinions, we gain much from the process of making claims and discussing them. We are testing our ideas every time we seek to persuade. Part of the allure of sharing a persuasive speech is that it can be much like sharing ideas over a cup of coffee. When we write and speak persuasively, we form and test opinions, and if we do it well, we may even convince others.

In this section, you will practice invention by coming up with opinions about a subject you may not have thought much about: the ownership of exotic animals. First, read the following almost unbelievable true story. Then follow the directions that come after the story to “invent” some opinions.

Lions and Tigers and Bears: The Tragic Escape of the Zanesville Animals—

He was no ordinary Ohio farmer. In addition to owning horses and chickens, Terry Thompson kept Bengal tigers, African lions, leopards, cougars, black bears, and grizzly bears in cages at his exotic animal preserve just outside of Zanesville. Thompson was a Vietnam veteran who had been arrested for the illegal sale of firearms early in 2010. He was freshly home from jail, and his animal preserve was deep in debt. Perhaps he was depressed that he could not afford to take care of his animals, or perhaps he was angry about his incarceration. No one knows what was going through his mind when he decided to open the cage doors and set his exotic animals free. No one knows because Thompson killed himself shortly after the release. Whatever his motive, he caused an international scandal.

It was late afternoon, October 18, 2011, when a neighbor first spotted Thompson's small herd of horses being chased by a bear. The neighbor wasn't too alarmed, not at first, because animal escapes from the preserve had happened before. But then the neighbor came face-to-face with a lion, stalking him, near his horse pen. He took cover in a shed and used his cell phone to call his mother to warn her to stay indoors. His mother swiftly called the police.

When sheriff and deputies arrived at the farm minutes later, they found a scene of utter chaos. Lions, tigers, and bears were running in every direction, dead chickens littered

the driveway, and a macaque monkey had been eaten by one of the big cats. With so many people living in the vicinity—and there was a motel on the nearby highway—the officers wanted to contain the dangerous animals as soon as possible. Unsuspecting people might easily be ambushed in parking lots and backyards.

The moment the officers stepped out of their cars, two snarling tigers charged them. The officers' guns blazed in response. The big cats dropped a few feet from the officers. That evening, there were more near misses. The sky was cloudy, and the shadows were deep, and a number of the big cats were skulking through the woods nearby. As the police moved through the undergrowth, flashlights in hand, animal eyes glowed in the dark. There was no question in the officers' minds—the animals needed to be killed before they could spread out further.

In all, forty-eight animals were shot dead (including eighteen tigers and seventeen lions), and one of the escapees—a timber wolf—was struck by a car on the highway. Other animals, including three cool-headed leopards, survived the slaughter because they never left their pens. These cats and other critters were tranquilized and sent to the Columbus Zoo.

Following this debacle, animal rights activists renewed their warnings against keeping exotic animals as pets and in private zoos. Fully grown, dangerous animals, such as boa constrictors, alligators, and cougars, are very difficult to keep, they said. Some activists also criticized the police for using deadly force without first attempting to tranquilize the animals, but others found this posture ungrateful. It's hard to carp at anyone who faces down an attacking three-hundred-pound tiger.

Some conspiracy theorists accused animal rights activists themselves of killing Thompson and releasing the animals. How could one man open all those cages, they argued, without being mauled to death in the process? Despite these accusations, investigators found that Thompson had opened the cages before taking his own life.

While there's no way to really prevent someone from making antisocial choices, the tragedy on Thompson's farm prompted lawmakers to take a close look at the regulations for exotic pet ownership. Less than a year after the incident, the governor of Ohio signed a new law regulating the ownership of exotic animals. All exotic pets needed to be registered and microchipped (in case of escape). Furthermore, the animals would be seized if any owner could not follow the law. Ohio now boasts some of the strictest exotic animal laws in the country.²⁰

20. Sources for this story include the following:

Chris Jones, "Animals: The Horrific True Story of the Zanesville Zoo Massacre," *Esquire*, March 2012, <https://www.esquire.com/news-politics/a12653/zanesville-0312/>.

Christina Caron, "Zanesville Animal Massacre Included 18 Rare Bengal Tigers," ABC News, October 19, 2011, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/zanesville-animal-massacre-included-18-rare-bengal-tigers/story?id=14767017>.

Adrian Burns, "Lions, Tigers and Conspiracy Theories," *Zanesville Times Recorder*, October 17, 2016, <https://www.zanesvilletimesrecorder.com/story/news/2016/10/17/lions-tigers-and-conspiracy-theories/91859662/>.

Chris Togneri, "Explanation for releasing Ohio exotic animals dies with owner," TribLive, October 21, 2011, <https://archive.triblive.com/news/explanation-for-releasing-ohio-exotic-animals-dies-with-owner/>.

Michael Rubinkam, "Zanesville Massacre 18 tigers 17 lions 3 cougars gunned down," Associated Press, January 27, 2018, as quoted by Big Cat Rescue, <https://bigcatrescue.org/zanesville-massacre-18-tigers-17-lions-3-cougars-gunned-down/>.

Laura A. Bischoff, "Ohio emerges as model on exotic animal rules," *Dayton Daily News*, October 13, 2017, <https://www.daytondailynews.com/news/ohio-emerges-model-exotic-animal-rules/amKpkKTR4VzNvPoD8fWYrO/>.

The Zanesville incident, and the private ownership of exotic animals, can elicit strong feelings. Any two people reading “Lions and Tiger and Bears” will most likely have different opinions about the information in the article. One person might say, “It’s important to restrict the ownership of dangerous animals.” Another person might say instead, “People should have the freedom to own dangerous animals with limited restrictions.”

In both cases, the opinion of each person is couched in the form of a statement and introduces an argument. An argument is a clear line of thinking aimed at proving a point. It requires a main statement—the thesis—and then evidence and follow-up explanations.

To practice the first step of the five canons, invention, list two possible arguments you can form from reading the article, as well as an opposing argument for each of them. Be sure to compose your answers as statements. Listing ideas is one way to brainstorm or “find out what you should say.”

Argument 1:

— Sample answer: The police should have tranquilized the exotic animals belonging to Terry Thompson rather than shooting them.

Opposing Argument for Argument 1:

— Sample answer: The police acted responsibly by immediately shooting the released animals belonging to Terry Thompson.

Argument 2:

— Sample answer: Conspiracy theories are as inevitable as they are untrustworthy.

Opposing Argument for Argument 2:

— Sample answer: Conspiracy theories sometimes prove correct, which is why they should at least be considered.

2. **CANON 2**—Arrangement: *Second, dispose and arrange your subject, not only in a certain order, but with a sort of power and judgment.*

Arrangement is not merely outlining—it’s outlining to make the most powerful and persuasive case you can for your thesis. (This idea will be discussed more in lesson 3.)

The following persuasive article from the book *The Upward Path* has its paragraphs arranged in the way the author intended. After reading the article, use the instructions that follow to come up with different ways of arranging the paragraphs so that they still make sense.



Our Dumb²¹ Animals

—by Silas X. Floyd

Silas Xavier Floyd (AD 1869–1923) was a journalist for the *Augusta Chronicle*, a pastor, and a public school principal.

1 Domestic animals—such as horses, cats, and dogs—seem to be almost as dependent upon kind treatment and affection as human beings. Horses and dogs especially are the most keenly intelligent of our dumb friends, and are alike sensitive to cruelty in any form. They are influenced to an equal degree by kind and affectionate treatment.

2 If there is any form of cruelty that is more blameworthy than another, it is abuse of a faithful horse who gives his life to the service of the owner. When a horse is pulling a heavy load with all his might, doing the best he can to move under it, to strike him, spur him, or swear at him is barbarous. To kick a dog around or strike him with sticks, just for the fun of hearing him yelp or seeing him run, is equally barbarous. No high-minded man, no high-minded boy or girl, would do such a thing.

3 We should never forget how helpless, in a large sense, dumb animals are—and how absolutely dependent upon the humanity and kindness of their owners. They are really the servants of man, having no language by which to express their feelings or needs.

4 The poet Cowper said:

I would not enter on my list of friends,
Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility, the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.

5 Boys and girls should be willing to pledge themselves to be kind to all harmless living creatures, and every boy and girl should strive to protect such creatures from cruel usage on

21. “Dumb” is used in this piece to mean “lacking the power of speech.” Floyd was not saying that animals lack intelligence.

the part of others. It is noble, boys and girls, for us to speak for those that cannot speak for themselves, and it is noble, also, for us to protect those that cannot protect themselves.²²

A. On the following lines, write the paragraph numbers found in the margin of the article in the order that makes the most sense if Cowper's poem is used as the first-paragraph "hook." Hint: The paragraphs should flow logically from one to the next. A paragraph with a thesis statement can help to orient readers at the beginning of the article.

_____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

Explain your answer:

- Sample answer: In my opinion, paragraph 5 tracks with Cowper's poem best and therefore should follow the poem. It also contains a strong thesis statement explaining the other paragraphs: "It is noble, boys and girls, for us to speak for those that cannot speak for themselves, and it is noble, also, for us to protect those that cannot protect themselves."
- Placing paragraph 5 after the poem will help to orient readers to the main idea of the article. Paragraphs 1, 2, and 3, in that order, have the same logical flow found in the original arrangement. Paragraph 1, regarding domestic animals generally and horses and dogs particularly, follows the paragraph 5 admonition that children should take care of "all harmless living creatures."



22. Adapted from Silas X. Floyd, "Our Dumb Animals," in *The Upward Path*, comp. by Myron T. Pritchard and Mary White Ovington (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920), 217, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/31456/31456-h/31456-h.htm#Page_217.

B. On the lines provided, write the paragraph numbers in the order that makes the most sense if paragraph 2 is used as the introductory (first) paragraph.

_____ 2 _____ 1 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

Explain your answer:

Sample answer: Paragraph 2 talks specifically about horses and dogs. Paragraph 1 follows logically, because horses and dogs are again mentioned, with the addition of cats. The other paragraphs flow logically as in the original.

After completing this exercise, discuss with your class whether the original arrangement or the new arrangements are more powerful.

3. **CANON 3**—Style: *Third, clothe and deck your thoughts with language.*

Style and delivery go hand in hand. The style with which you write will dramatically affect your spoken delivery. Style is really two things. First and foremost, it is the words we use to express our ideas. We have a vast number of ways to put words together to say the same thing, and the choices we make are part of our style. Keep in mind, however, that the best approach to style is clarity. You want to use wording that is as clear and understandable as possible so that your audience can follow what you are saying. Second, style is the unique way that each one of us sounds on paper or in speaking. Sometimes called the writer's or speaker's voice, style can be defined as a distinctive manner of expression in writing or speech. Mark Twain sounds like Mark Twain and none other; Gabriel García Márquez sounds like Gabriel García Márquez and no one else.

Style is made unique by the words we choose (**diction**), and the way we order those words to make sentences (**syntax**).

The following speech, "Ain't I a Woman," is famous for many reasons, not the least of which is its style. After reading the speech out loud, use the directions that follow to practice some aspects of style.

Ain't I a Woman?

—by Sojourner Truth²³

Sojourner Truth (AD 1797–1883) was born Isabella Baumfree. She spent her childhood and young adulthood enslaved to several cruel men until she finally took her daughter and escaped, never to return. She took shelter with an honorable white family and from there launched her career as an abolitionist, women’s rights advocate, and Christian preacher. “Ain’t I a Woman?” is her most famous speech, delivered at the 1851 Women’s Convention in Ohio.



Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head²⁴ me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [A member of the audience whispers, “Intellect.”] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.²⁵

23. Truth's speech was delivered in 1851 at a women's convention in Akron, Ohio. This version of the speech is the most famous, but it is also disputed. Truth did not speak in a Southern dialect in the style of this speech. Rather, she was a New Yorker and undoubtedly sounded like an educated northerner when she delivered the speech.

24. head: surpass

25. Sojourner Truth, “Ain't I a Woman?” (speech), Women's Convention, December 1851, Akron, OH, in Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan Brownell Anthony, and Matilda Joselyn Gage, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage* (Rochester, NY: Fowler and Wells, 1889), 1:165.

- A. One aspect of style is word choice, and the most important element of word choice is clarity. To avoid confusion and tedium for your audience, always use words that state your ideas plainly. The following paragraphs are from various speeches that can be rewritten to be less wordy or less out-of-date so that they are more clear. In the space provided, rewrite each speech, trying to simplify the language or make the point more directly. You should look up any words you don't know and update the language for today's audience.²⁶

Example: Sojourner Truth's points were most likely clear to her audience, but they may be less clear to audiences in the twenty-first century.

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [A member of the audience whispers, "Intellect."] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Rewritten for clarity and simplicity:

People talk about a person's intelligence. Now tell me, what does that have to do with the rights of women or African Americans? Even if it were true that my brain isn't as big as yours, wouldn't you be greedy not to acknowledge the wits I did have?²⁷

- a. Actor Will Rogers speaking about politics

Rogers was famous in his day as a theater cowboy, movie star, and newspaper columnist.



I tell you, folks, all politics is applesauce. . . . The more you read and observe about this politics thing, you got to admit that each party is worse than the other. The one that's out always looks the best. My only solution would be to keep 'em both out one term and hire my good friend Henry Ford²⁸ to run the whole thing and give him a commission on what he saves us. Put his factory in with the government!
—adapted from *Will Rogers' Weekly Articles, Volume 1* by Will Rogers²⁹

26. We don't mean to imply that any of these selections can be improved in their essentials. They have survived because they express something timeless and remain relevant today. However, some writing styles seem clunky to modern ears, and updating such texts can provide good practice in style.

27. Sojourner Truth was speaking within a nineteenth-century historical context wherein some white men believed that women and African Americans were intellectually inferior to them. Not all men believed this notion, but she was addressing the ones who did.

28. Founder of Ford Motor Company, Henry Ford made the mass production of automobiles possible through his ultraefficient assembly lines.

29. Adapted from Will Rogers, "Settling the Affairs of the World as They Should Be," *Will Rogers' Weekly Articles*, ed. James M. Smallwood and Steven K. Gragert, in vol. 1, *The Harding/Coolidge Years 1922–1925* (Stillwater, OK: Oklahoma State University Press, 1978; Claremore, OK: Will Rogers Memorial Museums, 2009), 5, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bz3yw4a2bM_WVIFyeDluTy1QQ2M/view.

— Sample answer: I tell you, people, all politics is nonsense. The more you read and observe, you must admit that each political party is worse than the other. The party that's out of power, whether Democrat or Republican, always looks best. My only solution to this problem is to kick out both parties for a term and then hire my friend, Henry Ford, to run the government and give him a percentage of whatever money he saves us. Turn the government into an assembly line—it'd be more efficient that way!

b. Scientist Marie Curie speaking to Vassar College students



Along with her husband, Pierre, Curie discovered radium, a radioactive element.

Now, the special interest of radium is in the intensity of its rays which is several million times greater than the uranium rays. And the effects of the rays make the radium so important. If we take a practical point of view, then the most important property of the rays is the production of physiological effects on the cells of the human organism. These effects may be used for the cure of several diseases. Good results have been obtained in many cases. What is considered particularly important is the treatment of cancer. . . .

But we must not forget that when radium was discovered no one knew that it would prove useful in hospitals. The work was one of pure science. And this is a proof that scientific work must not be considered from the point of view of the direct usefulness of it. It must be done for itself, for the beauty of science, and then there is always the chance that a scientific discovery may become like the radium a benefit for humanity. —excerpt from “The Discovery of Radium” by Marie Curie³⁰

30. Marie Curie, “The Discovery of Radium” (speech), Vassar College, May 14, 1921, Poughkeepsie, NY, in *The Discovery of Radium*, Ellen S. Richards Monographs 2 (Poughkeepsie: Vassar College, 1921; Project Gutenberg, 2020), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/61622/61622-h/61622-h.htm>.

Sample answer: Now, radium is special because it emits rays that are several million times greater than uranium rays. These rays can physically affect cells in the human body and may help cure several diseases, particularly cancer. But we must not forget that when radium was discovered no one knew that it would prove useful in hospitals. Our investigation was one of pure science. Clearly, scientific work must not be considered only for its usefulness. It must be done for the beauty of science alone, and then there is always the chance that a scientific discovery may become, like radium, beneficial to humanity.

- c. Vice President Theodore Roosevelt speaking to attendees at the Minnesota State Fair in 1901



In this speech, Roosevelt stated his belief that America can exert its power through diplomacy as long as diplomacy is backed up by military might.

A good many of you are probably acquainted with the old proverb, "Speak softly and carry a big stick—you will go far." If a man continually blusters, if he lacks civility, a big stick will not save him from trouble, and neither will speaking softly avail, if back of the softness there does not lie strength, power. In private life there are few beings more obnoxious than the man who is always loudly boasting, and if the boaster is not prepared to back up his words, his position becomes absolutely contemptible. So it is with the nation. It is both foolish and undignified to indulge in undue self-glorification, and, above all, in loose-tongued denunciation of other peoples. Whenever on any point we come in contact with a foreign power, I hope that we shall always strive to speak courteously and respectfully of that foreign power. Let us make it evident that we intend to do justice. Then let us make it equally evident that we will not tolerate injustice being done us in return. Let us further make it evident that we use no words which we are not prepared to back up with

deeds, and that while our speech is always moderate, we are ready and willing to make it good.³¹

Sample answer: Many of you know the old proverb, “Speak softly and carry a big stick—you will go far.” If a man is rude, a big stick will not prevent him from getting into trouble, and speaking softly won’t help either, if his soft words aren’t backed by might. In life we rarely meet anybody more obnoxious than the guy who is always loudly boasting, and if the boaster is not prepared to back up his words, he becomes a joke. The same goes for the nation. It is foolish and offensive to boast about our greatness, and especially to put down other nations. Whenever we encounter another country, I hope that we will always speak politely to that other country. Let’s be clear that we want to do justice. And then let’s make it equally clear that we will not tolerate injustices done to us. Let us also make it clear that we won’t use any words we aren’t prepared to back up with action. Our speech must always be civil, but we must be ready and willing to make good on our warnings.

B. Sojourner Truth used informal language to give her speech a down-to-earth style. She especially used:

- colloquialisms (such as “ain’t,” “out of kilter,” and “in a fix”)
- **contractions** (words or word groups that are shortened by replacing one or more letters with an apostrophe, such as “’twixt” for “betwixt” and “won’t” for “will not”)

In the following exercise, if a sentence is informal, rewrite it in the space provided to make it more formal.

- Change the colloquialisms into academic-sounding language.
- Undo the contractions.

If a sentence is formal, rewrite it to make it informal (in any manner) by using colloquialisms and contractions.

31. Theodore Roosevelt, “Speak Softly and Carry a Big Stick” (speech), Minnesota State Fair, September 2, 1901, Falcon Heights, MN, Speakola, transcript, <https://speakola.com/political/theodore-roosevelt-big-stick-minnesota-fair-1901>.



Notice how flexible and malleable each sentence is. In writing, the choice of style is often up to you as you seek to express your ideas most effectively.

Examples:

Formal: I have as much muscle as any man.

Change to: I've got the same muscle as any guy.

Informal: And ain't I a woman?

Change to: Am I not a woman as well?

a. Formal: That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages.

Informal: Sample answer: That gent over there says that gals need a hand to climb aboard a carriage.

b. Formal: I wish that talkative person would refrain from using expletives.

Informal: Sample answer: I wish that bigmouth would stop cussing!

c. Formal: Life is not at all easy when one is feeling sad.

Informal: Sample answer: Life ain't easy when you're feeling blue.

d. Informal: There's so much racket, there must be something out of kilter.

Formal: Sample answer: There is such a commotion, there must be something wrong.

e. Informal: All you gotta do is crack a smile and you'll see folks beam right back at you.

Formal: Sample answer: A person has only to smile, and people will smile back.

f. Informal: The only time folks can't stand gossip is when you gossip about them.

Formal: Sample answer: People dislike gossip only when they are the subject of it.



4. **CANON 4**—Memory: *Secure your thoughts in your memory.*

We don't depend on our memories as much as the ancients did when Cicero was teaching the five canons of rhetoric. Today many speakers use teleprompters attached to video cameras to transmit their speeches so they can be read line by line. The teleprompter helps to create the illusion that the speaker has her speech fully memorized. If electronic text is unavailable, many speakers like to use good, old-fashioned paper and read their speeches from a podium. While there's nothing wrong with reading a speech to an audience, this delivery method lacks spontaneity. Reading makes it harder to connect eye to eye with the audience.

Here's an alternative to reading a full speech or delivering the entire thing by heart: Create **cue cards**! Cue cards are index cards on which you have written a brief outline of your speech. You first need to practice your entire speech over and over so that you know it well, and then create the cards to help jog your memory at crucial points. When you use cards instead of a line-by-line copy of the speech, you will be amazed how much of it you remember as you speak. Not only that, but with cue cards you are more likely to interact with the audience, use gestures, and make eye contact, because your attention will not be glued to your written speech. When it comes to capturing your writing style in a speech, you'll want to be sure your cue cards include any specific quotes or phrases that you want to use. I imagine that if Abe Lincoln were using cue cards for the Gettysburg Address, he would have written down the phrase "Four score and seven years ago" verbatim so that he remembered to use that particular wording.

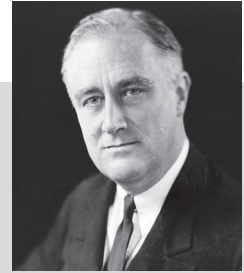
To get the idea of using cue cards, read the following excerpt from Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "The Four Freedoms" speech several times. Next, take six index cards and jot down a different phrase from the speech on each card. Then, keeping the phrases in chronological order, use the cards as memory prompts as you deliver the gist of the speech to your class. You will have to practice the speech three or four times before you use your cards so that it gets lodged in your memory. After that, practice the speech just using the cards until your delivery is smooth and confident.

Sample cue cards:

1. a world founded upon four essential human freedoms
2. freedom of speech and expression
3. freedom of every person to worship God in his own way
4. freedom from want
5. freedom from fear
6. kind of world attainable in our own generation

The Four Freedoms Speech (AD 1941)

—by Franklin Delano Roosevelt



Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) was the thirty-second president of the United States. He gave this speech as his State of the Union Address in 1941. Before the year was done, the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States had entered World War II.

In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want, which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear, which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world. That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called “new order” of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb.³²

5. **CANON 5**—Delivery: *Deliver your speech with dignity and grace.*

We will discuss speech delivery at length in lesson 4. For now, you can get a feel for one of the most dramatic aspects of delivery: inflection, which is the change in pitch or tone of the voice. We use inflection to give our words meaning. For example, with inflection, you can say, “I love you” in tones that mean “I’m passionately in love with you,” “I think you’re great,” “I actually detest you,” and more!

Practice inflection by reading the following speech out loud several different ways. You can read to your teacher, your class, or a partner.

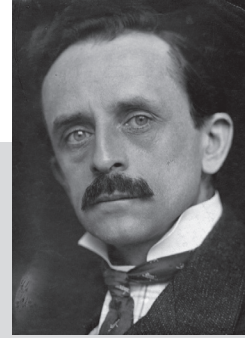
- First, read it boldly, as if you are filled with tremendous courage.
- Next, read it timidly, as if you don’t really believe what you are saying.
- Finally, read it contemptuously, as if your voice is dripping with scorn for your intended audience.

After reading, discuss with your class how changes in inflection give different passages in the text new meanings.

32. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “The Four Freedoms” (speech), USA Congress, January 6, 1941, Washington, DC, American Rhetoric, transcript and video, <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/fdrthefourfreedoms.htm>.

Courage

—by J.M. Barrie



Best known for his children's story *Peter Pan*, James Matthew Barrie was a popular English novelist and playwright of the early twentieth century. This speech was delivered at St. Andrew's University in Canada on May 3, 1922.

Courage is the thing. All goes if courage goes. What says our glorious Johnson of courage: "Unless a man has that virtue he has no security for preserving any other." We should thank our Creator three times daily for courage instead of for our bread, which, if we work, is surely the one thing we have a right to claim of Him. This courage is a proof of our immortality, greater even than gardens "when the eve is cool." Pray for it. "Who rises from prayer a better man, his prayer is answered."

Be not merely courageous, but light-hearted and gay.³³ There is an officer who was the first of our Army to land at Gallipoli.³⁴ He was dropped overboard to light decoys on the shore, so as to deceive the Turks as to where the landing was to be. He pushed a raft containing these in front of him. It was a frosty night, and he was naked and painted black. Firing from the ships was going on all around. It was a two-hours' swim in pitch darkness. He did it, crawled through the scrub to listen to the talk of the enemy, who were so near that he could have shaken hands with them, lit his decoys, and swam back. He seems to look on this as a gay adventure. . . .

In bidding you good-bye, my last words must be of the lovely virtue. Courage, my children and "greet the unseen with a cheer."³⁵

33. gay: cheerful

34. Gallipoli: a military campaign in the Strait of Dardanelles during World War I. The Allied forces attempted to weaken the Ottoman Turks, who were allied with Germany and the Central Powers.

35. Adapted from James M. Barrie, "Courage" (speech), St. Andrews University, May 3, 1922, Toronto, ON, The Literature Network, transcript, <http://www.online-literature.com/barrie/2088/>.

Lesson 1: The Five Canons of Rhetoric

Tell It Back—Summary

2. Briefly explain each of the five canons or rules of rhetoric.

Invention is brainstorming what to say, whereas arrangement is figuring out how to organize one's ideas. Style is choosing the right words and the way they will be expressed. Memory is learning a speech, or at least some parts of it, by heart. Delivery is using one's voice and gestures to effectively speak to an audience.

Talk About It—

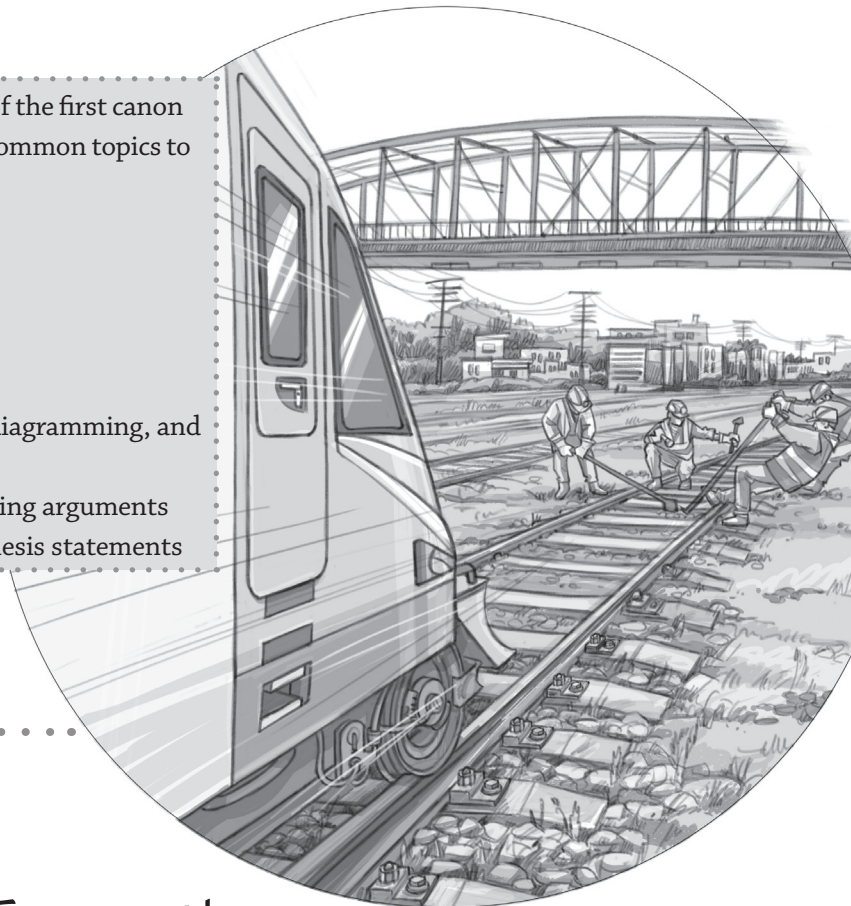
1. I would find arrangement the most challenging to take on. It's easy for me to come up with a whole chocolate box of good ideas, but it's hard for me to put them in an order that would make them the most impactful.
2. Lamiran “set his wits to work to discover some way of getting the fish.” Since the squirrel was planning out a speech—what to say—this is the process of invention. Next, Lamiran figured out an order or arrangement for flattering the hawk. He started out by praising Auac's beautiful feathers, then he praised his walk, and finally he praised his voice, which would cause Auac to drop the fish. The squirrel also settled on a style in which he used many flattering adjectives to describe the hawk and its voice: “beautiful,” “graceful,” “soft,” “sweet,” and “handsome.” Finally, his delivery was always addressed directly to his audience, the hawk, and it was punctuated by pauses so that the bird could act in response to the flattery.
3. Rhetoric is often portrayed with a sword in hand because, like a sword, rhetoric can be used as a defensive or offensive weapon. A sword can block the attack of a swordsman and then thrust back. Similarly, skill in rhetoric can help a person block a written or oral attack while next thrusting back with a counterargument. In addition, swords have sharp edges. In the allegory of Rhetoric, the edges may represent truth or the ability to cut through confusion. A double-edged sword may also mean that rhetoric has two sides: a good side that fights for truth and a dark side that manipulates people.

Notes

The purpose of this lesson is to deepen understanding of the first canon of rhetoric, invention, and to demonstrate how to use common topics to help generate arguments.

In this lesson, students will practice:

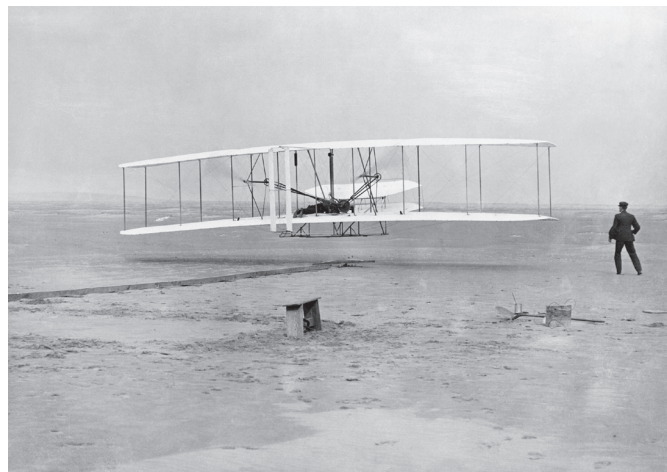
- oral narration in summary form
- critical thinking
- analysis of illustrations for visual rhetoric
- inventing arguments from moral dilemmas
- prewriting using the techniques of listing, cluster diagramming, and freewriting
- using a nonfiction article for prewriting and inventing arguments
- identifying common topics embedded in various thesis statements



Lesson 2

First Canon: Topics of Invention

Writers and inventors have lots in common. When I think of invention, what comes to mind are creative people tinkering with spare parts in their workshops and discovering newfangled devices. I think especially of the Wright Brothers piecing together the first airplane in their bicycle shop in Dayton, Ohio, using sprocket chains, hand-carved propellers, a gas engine, a spruce-wood frame, and cotton fabric. Their contraption doesn't look like it could possibly fly, but this photo shows proof that it did:



The image of inventors tinkering away in a workshop illustrates what it's like when writers fashion a persuasive speech. Like inventors, writers have certain materials and tools at their disposal, and then it's up to them to make their speeches soar. **Prewriting** helps writers to assemble the writing material; **common topics** are tools that can shape the material into useful arguments. In persuasive speech writing, the purpose of **invention** is to discover the main argument—the thesis statement—of the speech.

Rocket Propulsion

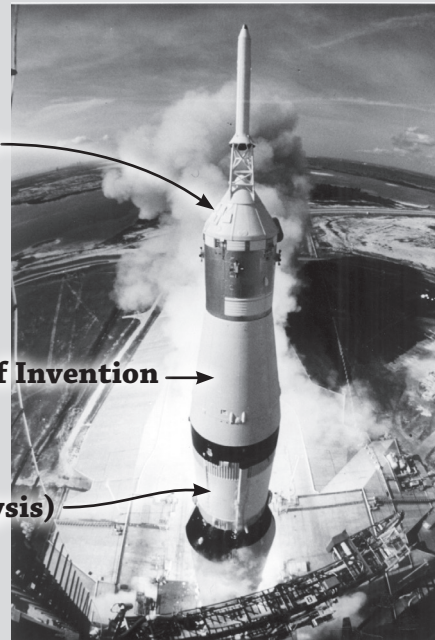
Prewriting and common topics give your persuasive speech liftoff!

The *Saturn V* was a three-stage rocket. Stage 1 boosted the rocket into the stratosphere, stage 2 thrust the rocket through the upper atmosphere (mesosphere), and stage 3 reached the moon. In a similar way, prewriting boosts your thinking away from the “gravity” of a blank page, common topics of invention carry your ideas to a higher level, and the thesis statement takes you to writing your speech.

**Stage 3:
Thesis Statement**

**Stage 2:
Common Topics of Invention**

**Stage 1:
Prewriting (Analysis)**



In this lesson, you will take a close look at prewriting and common topics. Be forewarned that there’s a lot of information here. You may feel, after a few paragraphs, as if you’re trying to drink from a fire hose. Rather than getting stressed out, just let this information wash over you like a gentle spring shower filled with the scent of lilacs and daffodils. You will have plenty of time, as you go through this book, to turn back to these pages and use them as a reference for your own inventing. That’s the main point—prewriting and common topics are supposed to help you discover ideas and arguments, not burden you with extra baggage.

Prewriting—

Inventors know that different materials, such as wood or metal, minerals or chemicals, make different things. They must do some daydreaming and brainstorming to figure out how to combine the materials to make them useful.

Like inventors, speechwriters have different materials at their disposal: beliefs, experiences, examples, texts, data, and facts. This is the evidence they will quote, refer to, and summarize to support their theses. Writers must do some daydreaming and brainstorming to figure out how to combine these materials to make them useful.

Word Roots

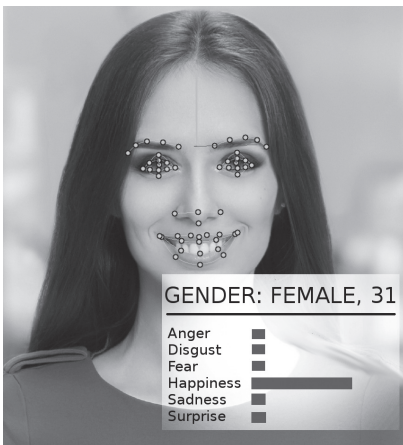
Our word “invention” derives from the Latin *invenire*, which means “to find.” Invention in rhetoric is the finding of something to say as well as the discovery of arguments.

The process of creating and arranging writing material is known today as prewriting. It's what you do to gather your thoughts before you write a first draft. You can also call this stage the analysis stage, in which a writer works to interpret the evidence and say what it means.

The blank page can sometimes be pretty intimidating. It can cause a form of mental constipation known as writer's block. Luckily, a little analysis and prewriting can act like prune juice on the brain and get those ideas flowing.

Let's say you have been asked to deliver a speech on the speculative question, "Does facial-recognition technology hold promise or peril for people?"

Before you get started, you need to make sure that you understand the question. Every person's face is as unique as a fingerprint or a voice, and facial-recognition cameras are able to identify individual faces. These cameras can be mounted in public places to monitor people on the sidewalk or in parks or sports stadiums. Whenever people pass by the cameras, their faces are scanned and run through a computer database for a match. The database can keep track of the movements of individuals from one position to the next. So, the speculative question asks if that sounds like good or bad technology to you. You can always check your understanding of a question by rephrasing it. Here's another version of the speculative question: "Does technology that recognizes faces and records people's movements have more potential to help or harm people?"



▲ This is an example of facial recognition technology, which measures lengths of features in the face and gaps between them. Image courtesy of Abyssus, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons



▲ Prewriting is like prune juice for the brain.

Now that you understand the question, it's time to get your initial ideas down on paper or into a computer document. Perhaps your thinking has been informed by articles, literature, or web pages. Regardless, in the prewriting process, you should capture anything that strikes you as important. Check out these three common techniques for prewriting: listing, cluster diagramming, and freewriting.

Listing—

The **listing** technique is about jotting down as many pertinent thoughts as come into your head. In other words, you make a list of any information you can think of that might apply to your topic. If you can group the thoughts into categories, so much the better.

The speculative question "Does facial-recognition technology hold promise or peril for people?" gives two options: promise or peril. As such, the question is inviting you to choose one side or the other. To use the listing technique to help you think about

how you might answer this question, you could make two columns, one labeled “Promise” and the other “Peril.” Then you would list every idea that occurs to you or that you have found in your research in the appropriate column. For example:

Facial Recognition Technology

Promise

- Track terrorists and other criminals
- Use face ID as currency instead of credit card payment (very convenient)
- Speed up check-in at airports and hotels
- Find lost or kidnapped people

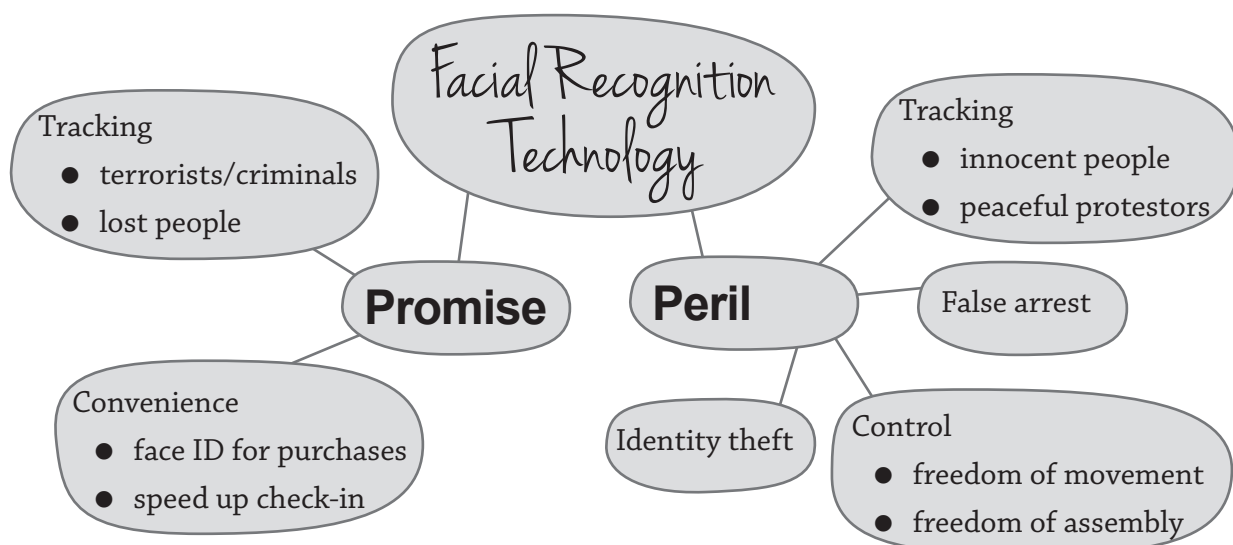
Peril

- Track innocent people and peaceful protestors
- Make false arrests due to faulty database
- Enable oppressive governments to control freedom of movement and freedom of assembly
- Increase opportunity for criminals to steal identities

By making lists, you are assembling information that can help you think about all aspects of the speculative question. Your lists can then help you choose how you will answer the speculative question and how you might defend your answer.

Cluster Diagramming—

Some people prefer drawing bubbles to making lists. Like lists, **cluster diagrams** can help you gather information about your topic, but instead of being organized into columns, the ideas are placed in bubbles. Ideas are linked together by drawing lines between the bubbles. The main idea sits at the center of the diagram, and related ideas link to it in secondary and tertiary bubbles. Here’s our list in a bubbly form:



Cluster diagramming helps some writers visualize information and how it connects, better than lists. By experimenting with lists and diagrams, you can discover what works best for you.

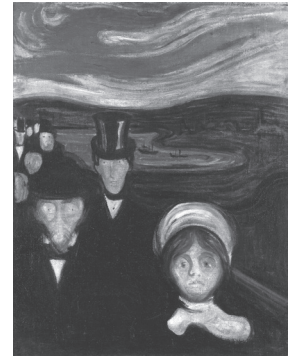
Freewriting—

Freewriting is a type of prewriting that is especially helpful for breaking a mental logjam. With freewriting, you quickly jot down, in one big paragraph, all the ideas on the subject that come to your head, without stressing about organization, grammar, punctuation, or complete thoughts. It's a technique that's related to stream-of-consciousness writing, whereby authors capture the kaleidoscope of their thinking as it pops into their heads. The main purpose of freewriting is to pour out ideas onto the page so that material is available for sorting out later.

Here's an example of freewriting about facial-recognition technology:

Facial recognition is good for catching fugitive terrorists and bad guys. Who knows? Maybe one of the best tools for policing ever. But while I appreciate the police, I worry about police states. How is this technology being used in authoritarian nations such as North Korea and China, etc.? Sure, it sounds convenient. No more need for passports or credit cards—just scan your face and the line moves along lickety-split. But wait! Aren't things convenient enough? Do we always need to pursue the next best convenience? I don't mind standing in line if it means I can protect my privacy. Do I want to be tracked wherever I go, whatever I do? I haven't done anything criminal and yet face-recognition cameras treat criminals and innocent people exactly the same. Like everybody's a suspect. If I had to choose between promise or peril, I'm leaning toward peril.

If you don't know where you stand on a subject, freewriting can also help you to take some steps toward forming an opinion. A persuasive essay necessarily means that you will be sharing an opinion with your audience. You want to try to persuade the audience that your opinion is correct. To do that well, it's good to first clarify what you think by jotting down your ideas in black and white.



▲ Facial recognition technology: Sure, it sounds convenient.

Common Topics—^A

After prewriting, it's time to think about forming arguments. You will be relieved to know that when you write a persuasive essay, you don't have to start arguing your perspective from scratch. You're lucky to have a ready-made arsenal of argument templates at your disposal.

^AAs an aid to invention, the common topics are an integral part of the *progymnasmata*. You will find that they can be challenging for students, and it will take students some time to learn them. However, even when students struggle to use them proficiently, the common topics can help students to think categorically. As with any aspect of composition, practice is necessary for growth in achievement.

From ancient times, certain types of argument have been identified as ordinary—in other words, they keep being used over and over again. These typical lines of argument are known as common topics. The word “topic” is derived from the Greek word *topos*, which means “place.” Common topics are places you can go to locate typical arguments. They can help you identify opinions that can be drawn from your prewriting and give you a variety of possible approaches for arguing those opinions.

How many times have you heard, “Two wrongs don’t make a right”? This argument assumes that one bad deed will not set another right—it belongs to the common topic of **relationship**. Or have you heard, “That’s like comparing apples to oranges”? Here, the argument insists that a comparison between two unlike things is invalid. It belongs to the common topic of **comparison**. Or how about, “That’s as likely as a flying pig”? In this case, the arguer makes the claim that something is impossible, an argument of **circumstance**. We hope you can see that common topics are, well, quite common. People use them all the time.

In the following sections, we take a quick look at each common topic in turn. You can use this information as a resource for places to look when you want to find arguments.

Common Topic 1: Definition—

When you put forth a **definition**, you may actually be making an argument. A definition dresses an idea in specific language and makes a claim about it. When that claim is an opinion that is debatable (rather than fact), your definition can be used as an argument. If you were to say, for example, that “love is a strong desire to cherish and protect another person,” you are arguing (1) that love is powerful (strong), (2) that it is an aspiration (desire), and (3) that it has an object (another person). This definition might rule out other definitions of love, such as “Love is merely a biological urge necessary to secure a mate and to replicate one’s genes.” As long as a definition expresses an opinion and can be supported with a clear line of thinking aimed at proving a point, it can be viewed as an argument.

We use definitions frequently in persuasive speech because they answer fundamental questions, such as “What is it?” and “To what category does it belong?” What we believe is stirred into the wording of the definition itself. So, if someone were to ask you, “Do you think pornography is OK?” you could answer with a definition: “Not really. Porn is a destructive industry that turns people into objects of lust instead of love.” By answering thus, you assert that pornography (1) does active damage (is destructive), (2) is a business (industry), and (3) reduces people to things (objects) to be used rather than individuals to be cherished.



▲ What is love?

To give you an idea of how common definitional arguments are, check out the following list of clichés.¹ Each worn-out expression is in the form of a definition and asserts an opinion that is open to confirmation or refutation.

- The love of money is the root of all evil.²
- Beauty is only skin deep.³
- Diversity is strength.
- A friend is one soul in two bodies.⁴
- Being a parent is the most important job in the world.
- Success is equal parts hard work and dumb luck.

As you can see, definitions that state opinions are used all the time. When inventing arguments, do not shy away from using definitions. They may seem humble, but they are mighty.

Common Topic 2: Comparison—

Topics of comparison explore similarities and differences as well as the degree of difference between things. Just as with definitions, you may already make arguments through comparisons without realizing you’re doing it. When you use a comparison that expresses your opinion (rather than a fact), you are making an argument.

Comparisons can be used to prove that (1) something is like something else or (2) something is unlike something else. This is called a **comparison of kind**. With this type of comparison, you create a catalog of ideas that explain similarities and differences in the nature of two or more things. Comparing apples to oranges by describing their shape, color, taste, and smell, for instance, is a comparison of kind.

Keep in mind that when we say “comparison” we mean “contrast” as well. A contrast is a comparison that reveals differences.

Comparisons also can be used to argue that something has more of a quality than something else. For example, one thing can be better, worse, older, wiser, gentler, harsher, sweeter, spicier, clumsier, etc., than another thing. This is a **comparison of degree**. You can use a **comparative modifier**^B—a modifier with an *-er* ending—to express degree, such as in the following examples: “My tiger is stronger than your lion.” “Your chocolate cake is tastier than my strawberry shortcake.” You can also express degree by using the words “more than” or “less than”: “Gelato is more decadent than ice cream.” “Troll fishing takes less skill than fly fishing.” Finally, comparisons of degree can assert the equality of two things using such phrases as “the same as,” “as good as,” “no better than,” and “no worse than.” For instance: “A thornbush waved around in the hand of a drunkard is no worse than a proverb in the mouth of a fool.”⁵

^BComparative modifiers are first introduced in the Writing & Rhetoric series in book 8, *Comparison*.

1. As with all clichés, you generally want to avoid them when writing your persuasive speech. A bored audience, after all, is a lost audience.
2. First Timothy 6:10 (KJV), in the Christian scriptures.
3. First coined by Sir Thomas Overbury and based on Proverbs 31:30 in the Hebrew scriptures.
4. Attributed to Aristotle.
5. Proverbs 26:9 (CEV), in the Hebrew scriptures.

Some comparisons fit into both categories. For instance, if you say, “Summer is better than winter,” you are probably thinking about differences in kind as well as degree. Here are some possibilities:

DIFFERENCES IN KIND:

- Summer has outdoor sports that don’t require heavy layers of clothing: swimming, biking, surfing.
- Summer’s fresh food in season includes: peaches, plums, melons, and homemade ice cream.
- Summer’s outdoor leisure activities include: cookouts, picnics, sunbathing on the beach.



▲ Which is better: summer or winter?

DIFFERENCES IN DEGREE:

- better temperature: Summer is warmer than winter.
- better light: Summer is brighter than winter.
- better color: Summer is more colorful than winter.

Another example is the metaphor found in Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 18”: “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate.”⁶ A metaphor compares one thing to a second seemingly unlike thing to show how they are similar, and when Shakespeare made this metaphor, he was probably thinking of a comparison of kind (“you are like a summer’s day”) and a comparison of degree (“you are more lovely and more temperate”).

TE There are a multitude of ways to construct comparisons. Here are just a few examples: **C**

- Dogs want only love, but cats demand worship. —Lucy Maud Montgomery⁷
- Fell⁸ luxury—more perilous to youth than storms or quicksand, poverty or chains. —Hannah More⁹
- What is worse than doing evil is being evil. —Dietrich Bonhoeffer¹⁰
- In war, the victorious strategist only seeks battle after the victory has been won, whereas he who is destined to defeat first fights and afterwards looks for victory. —Sun Tzu¹¹

CYou may wish to discuss each of these examples with your students to ensure comprehension. First, have students identify what is being compared. Then, to check for understanding, you can ask students to unpack the comparison—to clarify it by describing it further. In other words, students can explain what the author is saying by making the comparison. If students don’t understand the comparison, ask them to explain what doesn’t make sense to them. You can also ask students to note whether the comparison is of kind or degree, of both or neither.

For a more detailed list of ways to construct a comparison, please consult *The Argument Builder* (chapters 10–14) from Classical Academic Press.

6. William Shakespeare, “Sonnet 18,” Poetry Foundation, accessed November 14, 2019, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45087/sonnet-18-shall-i-compare-thee-to-a-summer-day>.

7. Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Emily of New Moon* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993), 275.

8. Fell: evil, malevolent

9. Hannah More, “Belshazzar: A Sacred Drama,” in *Sacred Dramas; Chiefly Intended for Young Persons: The Subjects Taken from the Bible* (London: T. Cadell, 1782; Internet Archive, 2006), 137, <https://archive.org/stream/sacreddramas00moreoft>.

10. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 67.

11. Adapted from Sun Tzu, “Tactical Dispositions,” chap. 4 in *Sun Tzu on the Art of War*, trans. Lionel Giles (London: Luzac & Co., 1910; Wikisource, 2017), [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Art_of_War_\(Sun\)/Section_IV](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Art_of_War_(Sun)/Section_IV).

In the end, comparisons can take a lot of interesting forms, and there isn't just one formula for making them. However you construct it, keep in mind that a comparison only forms an argument when it expresses an opinion—an idea that is debatable. When writing a thesis for a persuasive speech, you should avoid factual comparisons, such as:

- A live rock concert is almost as loud as a jet engine roaring.
- Jogging is less effective than bed rest for getting over the flu.

These give you nothing to argue about, because we take facts for granted.

Comparisons are great ways to develop the thesis of a persuasive speech, because they provide ready-made arguments. The comparison itself introduces your argument, and then it's up to you to defend that argument.

Common Topic 3: Relationship—

The topic of relationship seeks to establish some sort of relevant connection between two or more things. As with comparison, there are different strategies you can pursue to invent relational arguments.

CAUSE AND EFFECT—This is a strategy that shows why something happens. It strives to answer, “What causes the effect? What is the effect of the cause?” Your opinion in answer to those questions creates a relationship between two things and forms the foundation of your argument.

Take the following cause-and-effect statements, for example. While they may seem commonsense, they are still opinions that are open to debate, so they create arguments that could be used as the topic of a persuasive speech.

- The upsurge in teenage anxiety is due to the widespread use of social media.
- Violent video games and movies lead to violent behavior, including mass shootings.

The reason these statements are open to argument is that it may take more than one factor to cause anxiety or violent behavior in a person. Social media can contribute to anxiety, and violent media can contribute to aggression, but they are not necessarily the only causes. They may be a part of a package that also includes whether a young person has involved parents, a loving community, support at school, time

Ruined castles always feel like haunted places to me—haunted by history. I stood at the ruins of Tantallon castle in Scotland recently and wondered, “Why did this strong fortress fall apart? Did it collapse with age? Was it destroyed by artillery? Did it get hit by a giant wave?” The ruins were the effect. The causes were a mystery to me until I studied the history of the place. We are confronted with situations and “effects” every day, and we grow our understanding if we are curious enough to seek out the causes.



Image courtesy of Stephendickson, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons.

outdoors, and so on. Nonetheless, the foregoing statements about teen anxiety and violence create cause-and-effect relationships that would make for good arguments to explore in a thesis speech.

Cause-and-effect reasoning is essential in the sciences as well as the humanities. Many scientific ideas began as cause-and-effect arguments that were controversial, even among scientists, but are now accepted as plausible explanations of the phenomena we observe. For example:

- Finally we shall place the Sun himself at the center of the Universe.¹² All this is suggested by the systematic procession of events and the harmony of the whole Universe, if only we face the facts, as they say, “with both eyes open.” —Nicholas Copernicus
- The forces which displace continents are the same as those which produce great fold-mountain ranges. Continental drift,¹³ faults and compressions, earthquakes, volcanicity, transgression cycles and polar wandering are undoubtedly connected causally on a grand scale. —Alfred Wegener
- Eating high-fat foods, such as walnuts and avocados, in moderation can help prevent heart disease.

Cause and effect can be a solid way to form an argument that is persuasive and strong.

How can you tell the difference between cause/effect and antecedent/consequent?

Effect follows directly from the cause. For example, a walnut strikes your head and a lump forms. The strike is the cause and the lump is the effect. Consequent follows naturally from the antecedent, but is less direct than an effect. For example, if you live under a walnut tree, a walnut may hit your head and cause a lump. Living under a walnut tree is a dangerous thing. It is the antecedent for a consequent such as a lump on the head. However, the lump on the head follows indirectly from living under a walnut tree.

ANTECEDENT/CONSEQUENT—Similar to cause and effect, another way to create a relational argument is to use **antecedent and consequent**. These are fancy names for specific actions or a set of circumstances (antecedent) and what happens due to those actions or circumstances (consequent). The antecedent comes before; the consequent follows the antecedent logically or naturally. Antecedents and consequents often take the form of a statement beginning with “if,” but not always. When they express an opinion that is debatable, they can be used to create an argument. For example:

- If you tolerate the mob, sooner or later the mob will come for you. If you take away your opponent’s right to free speech, someday you too will be silenced.
- Whoso loves believes the impossible. —Elizabeth Barrett Browning¹⁴
- Since character is shaped by relationships, good or bad society improves or corrupts it.
—Blaise Pascal¹⁵

12. We now know that the sun is only the center of our solar system and is neither the center of the galaxy nor of the universe. However, Copernicus’s understanding of the motions of the planets (the “effect”) led him to rightly conclude that the cause of these orbits was the sun, not the earth.

13. The theory of plate tectonics has now absorbed the hypothesis of continental drift.

14. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1857; Project Gutenberg, 2018), 195, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/56621/56621-h/56621-h.htm>.

15. Adapted from Blaise Pascal, *Pascal’s Pensées* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1958; Project Gutenberg, 2006), 1.6, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/18269/18269-h/18269-h.htm>.

CONTRARY/CONTRADICTORY—**Contraries** and **contradictories** are relational arguments that overlap with contrasting comparisons. A comparison such as “Love is stronger than hate” states a difference in degree between love and hate. Contraries, on the other hand, seek to discover the opposite of things: “Love is the opposite of hate.” In this example, love and hate are opposites in relationship to each other. Contraries always occur in pairs and one idea expresses the opposite of the other: “Whereas love is patient and kind, hate is impatient and cruel.”

Contradictories can also occur in pairs, with one idea denying or contradicting the other: “Verbal abuse shows a lack of love.” “Either you love your spouse faithfully or you don’t, but be assured that faithfulness is necessary to love.” In these examples, verbal abuse and lack of faithfulness show relationship by standing in contradiction to love.

To come up with a contrary, you can ask the question, “What is the opposite or near-opposite?” or “What is incompatible with this thing?” When the answers to these questions are statements of opinion, they form arguments that can then be proved or defended in a persuasive speech. Here are some examples of a contrary:

Question: What is the opposite of love?

Contraries:

- The opposite of love is not hate, it’s indifference. —Elie Wiesel
- The opposite of love is using someone.¹⁶
- Whereas many people act as if love is self-fulfillment, it is really self-sacrifice.

Question: What is incompatible with love?

Contraries:

- Instead of grand gestures, love needs little moments of kindness every day to thrive.
- Love is the great beautifier of life, whereas selfishness turns life ugly.

To come up with a contradictory, you can ask, “What contradicts this idea?” Likewise, the answers to this question can form arguments. Here are some examples of a contradictory:

Question: What contradicts ideas about love?

Contradictories:

- If it’s true that love is patient and kind, then it cannot be impatient and unkind.
- Rather than obsessively caring for oneself, caring for others is the essence of love.



▲ Love needs little moments of kindness every day.

16. Based on an argument put forth by Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II): “A human being cannot be solely or mainly an object to be used.” Karol Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H.T. Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 28.

Common Topic 4: Circumstance—

The topic of circumstance helps us to invent arguments about what is possible or probable in a certain situation. It asks, “What is possible in this set of circumstances, and what is not possible?” Arguments from circumstance can also consider what happened in the past (past fact) that might determine what happens in the future (future fact). In this case, it’s appropriate to ask, “What happened in the past that might make a situation probable or improbable in the future?”

Here are some examples of arguments created from what is **possible/impossible**:

- Possible: Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other. —John Adams (In other words, the only possible circumstance in which the Constitution can govern properly is when people are moral and religious.)
- Impossible: It is impossible to be truly humble and at the same time to claim that you’re a humble person. (In other words, humility can’t exist in the circumstance of declaring one’s humility.)

And here are some examples of arguments created from **past fact/future fact**:

- Because exercise has always helped people to live healthier lives, it’s likely that you’ll live healthier, too, if you exercise. (In other words, what happened in the past—exercise helping people—makes the same probable for the future.)
- Few people get struck by lightning while running marathons, so it’s not likely you’ll get struck if you run into storms this weekend.

As you can see, both types of circumstantial statements can be used to create an opinion that you defend in a persuasive speech.

Common Topic 5: Testimony—

Another way to invent arguments, and add to your ethos at the same time, is to form an opinion that includes expert **testimony**. Testimonies are an appeal to expertise or accepted wisdom. When used judiciously, they can give a speech credibility (ethos).

In his book *Topica*, Cicero said, “I define testimony as everything that is brought into an argument from some external source for the purpose of changing minds. Not everyone has the ethos to give a valid testimony. Authority is necessary before a witness can be convincing. The best testimony, therefore, is anyone who has good character or authority.”¹⁷

Like Cicero, we will take a broad definition of testimony to mean any external authority that is brought into the thesis, either directly or indirectly.

Testimonies can include:

- legal documents: What does the law say?
- statistics: What facts and figures are available?
- authority: What do the experts say?
- maxims and proverbs: What wise sayings pertain to the subject?
- witnesses: What do ordinary people with firsthand knowledge have to say?

17. Adapted from Cicero, *Topica*, trans. C.D. Yonge (Attalus, 2017), 19.73, <http://www.attalus.org/old/topica.html>.

Here's an example of how using testimony to create an argument might work: Say you want to argue that cell phone use while driving should be banned. As I write this book, almost every state has outlawed texting and driving, and about half the states prohibit talking and driving with handheld devices,¹⁸ but let's say you want to take it a step further. You've seen studies that say that hands-free phone use causes the same level of impairment as handheld. In other words, people crash at about the same level regardless of whether they hold a phone pressed to their ear or they talk using their infotainment system. The problem is not what hands are doing, but that attention is divided between driving and talking.¹⁹ Driving while talking on a phone causes about the same rate of accidents as driving drunk. In light of these studies, you form the opinion that *all* cell phone use, whether handheld or hands-free, should be prohibited while driving. Here's a possible speech thesis that includes testimony from the studies to support your argument:

Driving and talking on the phone—even hands-free, according to the National Safety Council—is so dangerous that a national ban should be imposed against it.

By making an argument that refers to a trustworthy source, you increase your credibility. Here are two examples using statistics to state an opinion:

With over 90 percent of accidents due to driver error, including distracted driving,²⁰ a national ban on phone use by active drivers should be imposed.

According to the National Safety Council, a distracted driver is blind to as much as 50 percent of the driving environment.²¹ Because there has been a rapid increase in accidents due to distracted driving since people started using phones in their cars, phone use by drivers should be banned nationally.

Keep in mind that although testimony can be a helpful way to invent arguments and add credibility to them, it can also be a pitfall for plagiarism. It's basic fairness to give credit to someone else's work instead of passing it off as your own, so make sure that if you use testimony in your writing, you use citations as well.



Image courtesy of cogdogblog, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons.

18. "Cellular Phone Use and Texting while Driving Laws," NCSL, May 29, 2019, <http://www.ncsl.org/research/transportation/cellular-phone-use-and-texting-while-driving-laws.aspx>.

19. Aline Holzwarth, "The Real Reason You Shouldn't Text while Driving," *Behavioral Scientist*, April 3, 2018, <https://behavioralscientist.org/the-real-reason-you-shouldnt-text-while-driving/>.

20. Holzwarth, "The Real Reason."

21. "Understanding the Distracted Brain: Why Driving While Using Hands-Free Cell Phones Is Risky Behavior," National Safety Council, April 2012, 2, <https://www.nsc.org/Portals/0/Documents/DistractedDrivingDocuments/Cognitive-Distraction-White-Paper.pdf>.

Hooks can also include testimony. A hook is the attention grabber in the introduction of a narrative, essay, or speech. Hooks can include short narratives, questions, descriptions, illustrations, proverbs, sayings, quotations, provocative statements, statistics, or facts. For more on hooks, please see *Writing & Rhetoric: Thesis Part 1*.

As you can see, common topics can provide you with options to help you invent different types of arguments. Once you have finished your prewriting, look over your research work and see if any of the common topics can be applied to it. Can you form an opinion based on how one thing compares to another? Can you form an opinion based on what will happen if an action is taken? Can you form an opinion based on the testimony of someone else? And so on. Once you've identified a few possible arguments, you can settle on a main idea for your thesis statement.

Take It Away—



- You've come far and you've come fast in your understanding of classic rhetoric by delving
- into the canon of invention. Before moving on to the other canons, why don't you pause for
- some refreshment? Grab a cold drink from the water fountain or refrigerator and then get to
- work on the following practice.

Tell It Back—Summary

- TE** 1. Summarize aloud the purpose of prewriting. Then explain the following three ways to prewrite:
- listing
 - cluster diagramming
 - freewriting

- TE** 2. Briefly explain each of the common topics for inventing arguments:
- definition
 - comparison
 - relationship
 - circumstance
 - testimony

Talk About It—

- TE** 1. In persuasive writing, invention is the process of discovering arguments for a speech or paper. How is this process like inventing a new device, such as a jet pack or a robot? What are the materials of a writer?

- 2. Like speeches, pictures can contain arguments—visual arguments. In other words, the content of the image expresses an opinion and seeks to make a persuasive statement. Persuasion in pictures is known as **visual rhetoric**.

Carefully examine the following three images. Based on what you see, invent an argument (i.e., a thesis statement) for each image that captures the opinion you think the image is expressing. Use the common topics of invention to help you to come up with ideas.

- Ask, “What is the image trying to say to me?”
- Try to answer this question with a statement that shows definition, comparison, relationship, circumstance, or testimony.
- Each of these images can represent more than one common topic or argument. If you are able to think of more than one possible statement, pick the strongest one to be your thesis.

TE

A. Rosie the Riveter

Rosie was an icon developed during World War II to recruit women to factory and munitions²² jobs. These women took the place of male workers who had gone overseas to fight the war.

Example:

Common topic: relationship—antecedent/consequent

Argument: If women work factory jobs, we can win the war.



TE

B. Smokey the Bear

Smokey is the well-known icon of the US Forest Service. The ad campaign was designed to draw attention to human carelessness as a major factor in wild forest fires. Smokey’s full slogan was “Only YOU can prevent forest fires.”

Example:

Common topic: testimony

Argument: Smokey the Bear is right when he says that fires caused by carelessness can be prevented.



TE

C. *Saturday Evening Post* cover

The Saturday Evening Post is a magazine that was particularly popular in the first half of the twentieth century. Norman Rockwell was its most famous cover artist.

Example:

Common topic: definition

Argument: Responsibility means doing the things we should be doing and ignoring temptation to do otherwise.



22. munitions: weapons, ammunition, and other war supplies

Write & Discuss—Moral Dilemmas



Life offers us many moral dilemmas, and we can test our beliefs by reasoning through them. A moral dilemma is a situation in which a person must take an action when no perfect right or wrong choice exists. Writing about moral dilemmas offers us an opportunity to think through what we might do in a bad situation and to invent arguments justifying our actions.

In this exercise, your teacher will pick one of two moral dilemmas for you to write about in the space provided. Take twenty minutes to read about the dilemma and then to invent an argument that justifies a course of action in response to the dilemma. First, determine what action you would take if you were confronted with the situation. Next, defend your action with at least one common topic argument: definition, comparison, relationship, circumstance, or testimony. Follow up the argument with an explanation and some freewriting on the topic. Finally, engage in conversation with your class or your teacher about the choice you made.

Example: The Robin Hood Dilemma

Fivescore²³ [of] good stout yeomen²⁴ gathered about Robin Hood, and chose him to be their leader and chief. Then they vowed that even as they themselves had been despoiled²⁵ they would despoil their oppressors, whether baron, abbot, knight, or squire, and that from each they would take that which had been wrung from the poor by unjust taxes, or land rents, or in wrongful fines. But to the poor folk they would give a helping hand in need and trouble, and would return to them that which had been unjustly taken from them.²⁶

Moral dilemma: What if the rich are hardworking people who earned their money honestly? Is it still OK for you (as Robin Hood) to rob from the rich and give to the poor?

Course of action: I would not rob from honest, hardworking people even if they were rich and could afford to lose the money.



Image courtesy of Jo Jakeman, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons.

23. fivescore: one hundred; a score is twenty

24. yeomen: farmers, guards

25. despoiled: robbed

26. Howard Pyle, *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* (Project Gutenberg, 2006), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/964/964-h/964-h.htm>.

Argument(s) to support the course of action:

- Testimony (legal): For centuries, the law has stated that stealing, even from the rich, is wrong, and it is still wrong today.
- Definition: Robbing would be taking what I have not earned to pay for what I do not deserve.
- Relationship—Antecedent/Consequent: If stealing becomes commonplace in a society, distrust grows and more police become necessary.

Explanation/Freewriting (relationship): The rich will not simply allow themselves to be pilfered, but will protect their wealth with gates, alarms, guns, and, yes, more police. Fewer police are necessary when the population is generally honest and less inclined to crime. Unfortunately, crime tends to increase where there's more poverty. All nations have inequality of wealth, even nations that steal private property for the state (as in communist countries). It's human nature for people to defend their wealth and their money, even when they have absurd amounts of it. In an ideal world, the rich would be the leaders in reducing poverty by being the most charitable.

1. The Runaway Train Dilemma

You are a switchman in a railroad yard. It's your job to pull the levers to turn trains to the right or to the left, to head the trains down one set of tracks or another. Today in the train yard various work crews are busy doing maintenance and repair on the tracks. As you survey the railroad yard, suddenly you spot a runaway train heading toward the work-



ers at full speed. Maybe the train engineer died of a heart attack; maybe he's gone crazy. In any case, you have a decision to make. The train is barreling down on three unsuspecting workers. If you do nothing, in a second they will all be crushed. If you pull the lever to redirect the train, it would instead head down a track where only one worker is stationed.

Moral dilemma: Should you allow the three men to be killed by doing nothing or actively aid in killing one man by pulling the switch?

Course of action: _____

Sample answer: I would actively pull the switch to save the three men, even though the one man would die.

Common topic argument: _____

Sample answer: (comparison) It is better to save the lives of three people than the life of just one person.

Explanation/Freewriting: _____

Sample answer: When I make this argument, I'm assuming only one family will mourn the death of a loved one rather than three families. This boils down to the idea that it's important to do the most good for the most people. On the other hand, I think it'd be pretty hard to escape feeling guilty about the man I had a hand in killing. What if the man who died was a better person than the other three put together? What if the man who died was on the verge of doing something extraordinary for his family or a friend, maybe reconciling with someone after years of estrangement, whereas the other three men were already happily at peace with everyone in their lives? I would not want to be in this position.

2. The Grenade Attack Dilemma

Jason Dunham was a Marine Corps recruit from the small town of Scio, New York. On April 14, 2004, while patrolling in Karabilah, Iraq, Corporal Dunham and his squad heard rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire in the distance. As it turns out, Iraqi insurgents were attacking an American convoy on its way to Camp Husaybah. Dunham and his team advanced swiftly to the attack to provide support and to draw heat away from the convoy. As they approached the firefight, Dunham's squad dismounted their vehicles and moved silently through the city streets just south of the action. They managed to outflank a column of suspicious vehicles attempting to flee the scene. Brandishing their guns, the marines halted the vehicles to search for weapons. As they approached one car, an insurgent threw open his door and rushed Dunham, grenade



▲ American troops on patrol in Karabilah, Iraq. Here, US Marine Corps Corporal Adam A. Anderson signals to his squad to halt.

in hand. As Dunham grappled with the man, the insurgent dropped the grenade on the ground. Calling a warning to his squad, Dunham dived on the grenade with his helmet and shielded the blast with his body. By acting so quickly, Dunham saved the lives of his fellow marines. He died eight days after sustaining injuries from the grenade and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.²⁷

Moral dilemma: If you were in the same situation, would you sacrifice your own life to save the lives of others?

Course of action: _____

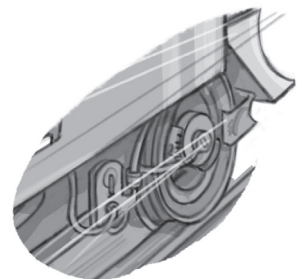
— Sample answer: Much to my shame, I would probably scream and then run to save my life.

Common topic argument: _____

— Sample answer: (relationship: antecedent/consequent) Since self-preservation is a basic human instinct, people too often choose to protect themselves over performing noble actions.

Explanation/Freewriting: _____

— Sample answer: Self-preservation is part of the deep instinctive “wiring” of every human being. It takes much conscious conditioning to perform a noble deed of self-sacrifice in the face of danger. If a live grenade were to drop in a crowd of people, few individuals would have the presence of mind to leap on it with a helmet. The instinct to survive would be overwhelming—flight would best enable escape and survival. To act so courageously takes forethought and even rehearsal in one’s mind. Corporal Dunham was unique because he probably considered ahead of time what he would do in that circumstance. Just as we fantasize and daydream about many things, Dunham probably dreamed about serving his comrades in a moment of danger. By thinking ahead, he was prepared to save his fellow soldiers. However, self-protection is the reason we have few genuine heroes in this world.



27. Based on various sources, including David Moore, “Jason Dunham: Heroic Marine Jumps on Grenade to Save Others,” Veterans United Home Loans, August 10, 2012, <https://www.veteransunited.com/network/medal-of-honor-bio-cpl-jason-dunham/>.

Go Deeper—

1. **PREWRITING**—Read the following “open letter” on autonomous weapons. Then use the instructions that follow to complete the exercise.

We Must Reckon with the Weapons of the Future Now

—from “Autonomous Weapons: An Open Letter from AI & Robotics Researchers”

Autonomous weapons select and engage targets without human intervention. They might include, for example, armed quadcopters that can search for and eliminate people meeting certain pre-defined criteria, but do not include cruise missiles or remotely piloted drones for which humans make all targeting decisions. Artificial Intelligence (AI)²⁸ technology has reached a point where the deployment of such systems is—practically if not legally—feasible within years, not decades, and the stakes are high: autonomous weapons have been described as the third revolution in warfare, after gunpowder and nuclear arms.

Many arguments have been made for and against autonomous weapons[:] for example that replacing human soldiers by machines is good by reducing casualties²⁹ for the owner but bad by thereby lowering the threshold for going to battle. The key question for humanity today is whether to start a global AI arms race or to prevent it from starting. If any major military power pushes ahead with AI weapon development, a global arms race is virtually inevitable, and the endpoint of this technological trajectory is obvious: autonomous weapons will become the Kalashnikovs³⁰ of tomorrow. Unlike nuclear weapons, they require no costly or hard-to-obtain raw materials, so they will become ubiquitous³¹ and cheap for all significant military powers to mass-produce. It will only be a matter of time until they appear on the black market and in the



Tatiana Krasnova, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

28. Artificial intelligence is the ability of computers or robots to do tasks that have been the purview of human intelligence. For example, AI computers can play chess against human chess players. AI robots can answer random questions with a high degree of accuracy.

29. casualties: dead and wounded

30. Kalashnikovs: Soviet-style assault rifles that became common in many wars and guerilla movements of the twentieth century

31. ubiquitous: everywhere present

hands of terrorists, dictators wishing to better control their populace, warlords wishing to perpetrate ethnic cleansing, etc. Autonomous weapons are ideal for tasks such as assassinations, destabilizing nations, subduing populations and selectively killing a particular ethnic group. We therefore believe that a military AI arms race would not be beneficial for humanity. There are many ways in which AI can make battlefields safer for humans, especially civilians, without creating new tools for killing people.

Just as most chemists and biologists have no interest in building chemical or biological weapons, most AI researchers have no interest in building AI weapons—and do not want others to tarnish their field by doing so, potentially creating a major public backlash against AI that curtails its future societal benefits. Indeed, chemists and biologists have broadly supported international agreements that have successfully prohibited chemical and biological weapons, just as most physicists supported the treaties banning space-based nuclear weapons and blinding laser weapons.

In summary, we believe that AI has great potential to benefit humanity in many ways, and that the goal of the field should be to do so. Starting a military AI arms race is a bad idea, and should be prevented by a ban on offensive autonomous weapons beyond meaningful human control.³²

In the space provided, use one of the three prewriting techniques—listing, cluster diagramming, or freewriting—to gather material for inventing an argument based on the text. After the process of prewriting, put your knowledge of common topics to good use and write a thesis statement that expresses an argument about artificial intelligence. Remember that a good thesis statement:

- expresses a debatable opinion
- is not too broad and not too vague
- can be supported by evidence



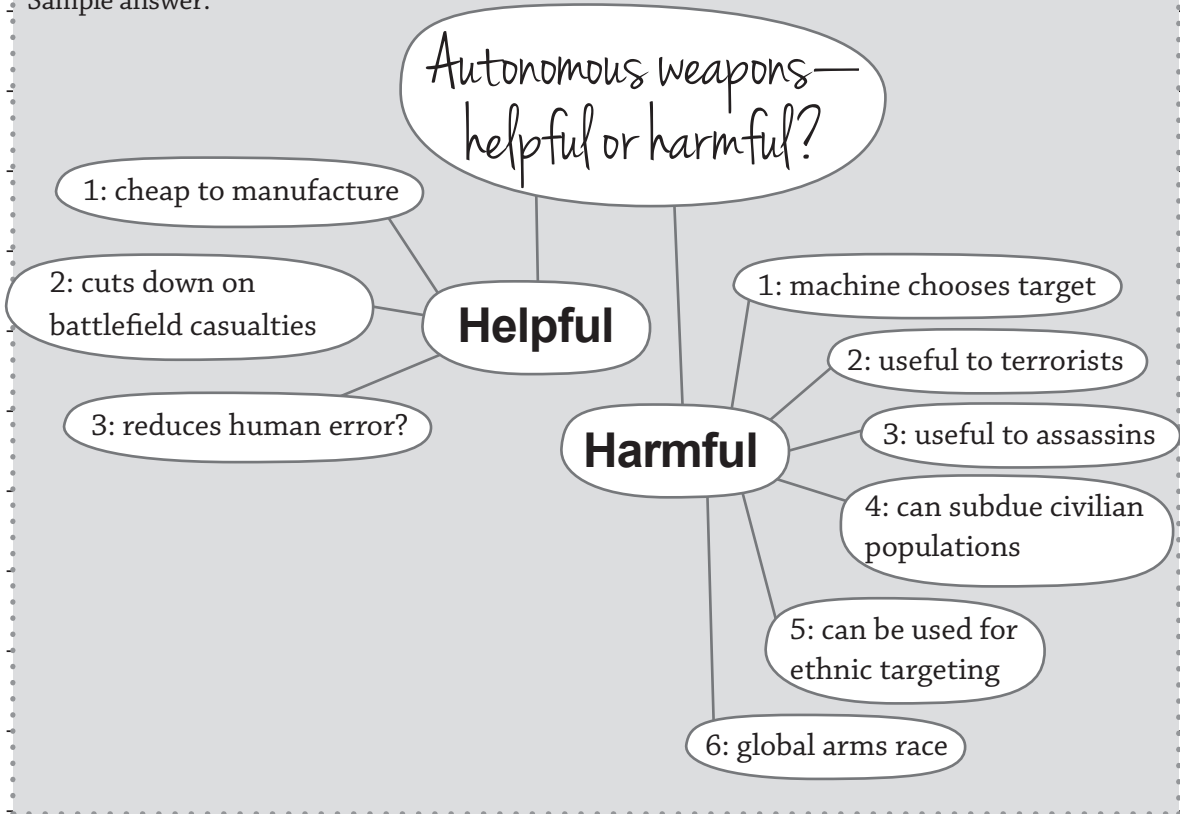
32. "Autonomous Weapons: An Open Letter from AI & Robotics Researchers," Future of Life Institute, accessed November 14, 2019, <https://futureoflife.org/open-letter-autonomous-weapons>. Used with permission.



This icon indicates where you will be doing prewriting.

Prewriting: _____

Sample answer:



Common topic: Sample answer: relationship: cause/effect _____

Thesis statement: Sample answer: Because the nuclear arms race was so costly and can still bring catastrophe to humanity, nations should immediately secure a treaty against the development of autonomous weapons. _____

- 2. Take a look at the following list of arguments by the quotable George Orwell. In the space provided, label each statement with a common topic—definition, comparison, relationship, circumstance, or testimony—that you think applies to the argument. Keep in mind that there can be some overlap in common topics, and one statement may be properly labelled as two different topics. Be sure you are able to defend your answer.



Example:

_____ comparison (difference/degree) _____ [I]ntellectuals are more totalitarian³³ in outlook than the common people. . . . Most of them are perfectly ready for dictatorial methods, secret police, systematic falsification of history etc. so long as they feel that it is on “our” side.³⁴

- A. comparison (similarity) _____ How can you call yourself a true tea-lover if you destroy the flavor of your tea by putting sugar in it? . . . Tea is meant to be bitter, just as beer is meant to be bitter.³⁵
- B. definition _____ If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.³⁶
- C. circumstance (possible/impossible) _____ It is almost impossible to think without talking. . . . Take away freedom of speech, and the creative faculties dry up.³⁷
- D. relationship (cause/effect) _____ People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf.³⁸
- E. definition _____ “Nationalism” [is] first of all the habit of assuming that human beings can be classified like insects and that whole blocks of millions or tens of millions of people can be confidently labelled “good” or “bad.” But secondly—and this is much more important—[it is] the habit of identifying oneself with a single nation . . . placing it beyond good and evil and recognizing no other duty than that of advancing its interests.³⁹

33. totalitarian: a form of government that exerts total control over the lives of people through a dictator or a small group of state leaders
 34. Orwell to H.J. Willmet, London, May 18, 1944, in *George Orwell: As I Please, 1943–1946*, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (Boston: David R. Godine, 2000), 148–150.
 35. George Orwell, “A Nice Cup of Tea,” *Evening Standard*, January 12, 1946, The Orwell Foundation, <https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/a-nice-cup-of-tea/>.
 36. George Orwell, original unpublished preface to *Animal Farm* (New York: Signet, 1996), in Ian R. Willison, “George Orwell: Some Materials for a Bibliography” (thesis, School of Librarianship, University of London, 1953).
 37. George Orwell, “As I Please,” *Tribune*, April 28, 1944, in *The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell*, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, vol. 3, *As I Please, 1943–1946* (Boston: Nonpareil, 2000), 133, <https://books.google.com/books?id=fCRLPIbLP8IC>.
 38. Attributed to George Orwell. A similar quote can be found in George Orwell, “Notes on Nationalism,” *Polemic*, October 1945, in *The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell*, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, vol. 3, *As I Please, 1943–1946* (Boston: Nonpareil, 2000), 378, <https://books.google.com/books?id=fCRLPIbLP8IC>: “Those who ‘abjure’ violence can only do so because others are committing violence on their behalf.”
 39. George Orwell, “Notes on Nationalism,” 362.

- F. comparison (difference/kind) _____ Nationalism is not to be confused with patriotism. . . . By “patriotism” I mean devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force on other people. Patriotism is of its nature defensive, both militarily and culturally. Nationalism, on the other hand, is inseparable from the desire for power.⁴⁰
- G. relationship (antecedent/consequent) _____ If you have no money, men won’t care for you, women won’t love you.⁴¹
- H. testimony (maxim and proverb) _____ There is an old saying that if you throw enough mud some of it will stick, and the mud has stuck to Wodehouse⁴² in a rather peculiar way.⁴³
- I. relationship (antecedent/consequent) _____ [Lunatics] tend to gravitate towards bookshops, because a bookshop is one of the few places where you can hang about for a long time without spending any money.⁴⁴
- J. testimony (authority) _____ When Voltaire made his often-quoted statement that the country of Britain has “a hundred religions and only one sauce,” he was saying something which was untrue.⁴⁵
- K. relationship (cause/effect) _____ If publishers and editors exert themselves to keep certain topics out of print, it is not because they are frightened of prosecution but because they are frightened of public opinion.⁴⁶
- L. circumstance (possible/impossible) _____ Military display is only possible in countries where the common people dare not laugh at the army.⁴⁷

40. George Orwell, “Notes on Nationalism,” 362.

41. George Orwell, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1956), 14, <https://books.google.com/books?id=fr16Fz9zdJ0C&lpg>.

42. P.G. Wodehouse was a British humorist and writer.

43. George Orwell, “In Defence of P.G. Wodehouse,” *Windmill*, no. 2 (July 1945), The Orwell Foundation, <https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/in-defence-of-p-g-wodehouse/>.

44. George Orwell, “Bookshop Memories,” *Fortnightly*, November 1936, The Orwell Foundation, <https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/bookshop-memories/>.

45. George Orwell, “British Cookery” (unpublished article, 1946), The Orwell Foundation, <https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/british-cookery/>.

46. George Orwell, original unpublished preface to *Animal Farm*.

47. George Orwell, “The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius” (Searchlight Books, 1941), The Orwell Foundation, <https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/the-lion-and-the-unicorn-socialism-and-the-english-genius/>.

Lesson 2: First Canon: Topics of Invention

Common Topic 2: Comparison—

- Dogs want only love, but cats demand worship. —Lucy Maud Montgomery¹

What is being compared: Dogs are compared to cats.

Unpack: This comparison suggests a contrast—dogs tend toward loyalty and service; cats generally have more complex personalities.

This is a comparison of kind.

- Fell² luxury—more perilous to youth than storms or quicksand, poverty or chains. —Hannah More³

What is being compared: Luxury is compared to several horrible dangers.

Unpack: This comparison is saying that luxury is worse than many types of danger. The statement doesn't say how luxury is dangerous, but I'm guessing the damage is done to a person's character. I've known several young people who grew up in riches and luxury and they seemed to lack empathy and the character quality of persistence. On the other hand, external dangers, such as storms or poverty, can actually build a person's character.

This is a comparison of kind and degree.

- What is worse than doing evil is being evil. —Dietrich Bonhoeffer⁴

What is being compared: Doing evil is contrasted with being evil.

Unpack: Bonhoeffer seems to be saying that someone who is evil through and through, body and mind, is worse than someone who behaves in an evil fashion. Presumably, the person who “merely” does something evil is temporarily behaving badly in a moment of passion and the evil act, though significant, is not habitual. The person who *is* evil is daily committing crimes against other people either out of habit or out of character.

This is a comparison of kind and degree.

- In war, the victorious strategist only seeks battle after the victory has been won, whereas he who is destined to defeat first fights and afterwards looks for victory. —Sun Tzu⁵

What is being compared: The victorious strategist is compared with a commander whose strategy is to fight first.

Unpack: Sun Tzu seems to be saying that it's a losing strategy to fight unless one is confident of a predetermined victory. He is warning commanders against going to war unless the outcome of success is already assured.

This is a comparison of kind.

1. Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Emily of New Moon* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993), 275.

2. Fell: evil, malevolent

3. Hannah More, “Belshazzar: A Sacred Drama,” in *Sacred Dramas; Chiefly Intended for Young Persons: The Subjects Taken from the Bible* (London: T. Cadell, 1782; Internet Archive, 2006), 137, <https://archive.org/stream/sacreddramas00moreoft>.

4. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 67.

5. Adapted from Sun Tzu, “Tactical Dispositions,” chap. 4 in *Sun Tzu on the Art of War*, trans. Lionel Giles (London: Luzac & Co., 1910; Wikisource, 2017), [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Art_of_War_\(Sun\)/Section_IV](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Art_of_War_(Sun)/Section_IV).

Tell It Back—Summary

1. Prewriting’s purpose is to help writers assemble writing material for the process of invention. Prewriting can also help to overcome writer’s block by stimulating the flow of ideas.

Listing is jotting down pertinent words and thoughts as they come into your head.

Cluster diagramming is writing ideas in bubbles and showing connections between the ideas by linking the bubbles with lines.

Freewriting is pouring ideas onto a page in sentence form, but without worrying about organization, grammar, punctuation, or complete thoughts.

2. Definition is used in persuasive speech to answer questions such as “What is it?” and “To what category does it belong?” If a definition expresses an opinion and introduces a clear line of thinking aimed at proving the opinion, it can be considered an argument.

Comparison is an exploration of similarities and differences, as well as the degree of difference, between two or more things. A comparison that presents a supportable opinion can be used as an argument.

Relationship seeks to establish some sort of relevant connection between two or more things. Subtopics of relationship include cause and effect, antecedent/consequent, and contrary/contradictory.

Circumstance helps writers to invent arguments about what is possible or probable in a certain situation. This type of argument can also consider what happened in the past (past fact) that might determine what happens in the future (future fact).

Testimony is a way of forming an argument that includes expertise or accepted wisdom. Testimony can include legal documents, statistics, authorities, maxims and proverbs, and witnesses.

Talk About It—

1. Inventing arguments is like inventing a new device because it too requires discovery of ideas and then creativity to make something new. Also, both kinds of invention use materials. The materials of invention are beliefs, experiences, texts, data, and facts.

2. Visual rhetoric

- A. Rosie the Riveter

Common topic: comparison

Argument: Women can do the same jobs men do.

- B. Smokey the Bear

Common topic: circumstance—past fact/future fact

Argument: Knowing that many historic forest fires were caused by human carelessness, we can help prevent future disasters by taking the time to douse our campfires.

- C. *Saturday Evening Post* cover

Common topic: contradictory

Argument: Playing is easy, whereas being responsible is hard.