**AP Language and Composition / First Year Writing at UCONN ECE Summer Assignments**

* Summer Reading Choices and Dialectical Journal
* Argument Essay.
* Required Supplementary Readings (in this packet)
* **First-Year Writing at UCONN**

Summer Contact Information

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**Summer reading is due the first day of class and will be worth 20% of the first marking period grade.**

**Additionally, students signing up for the UCONN ECE portion will be expected to maintain the rigorous standards, write 30 publishable pages of writing, and earn a grade of C or better to qualify for 4 credits of FYW (First-Year Writing) credit at UCONN.**

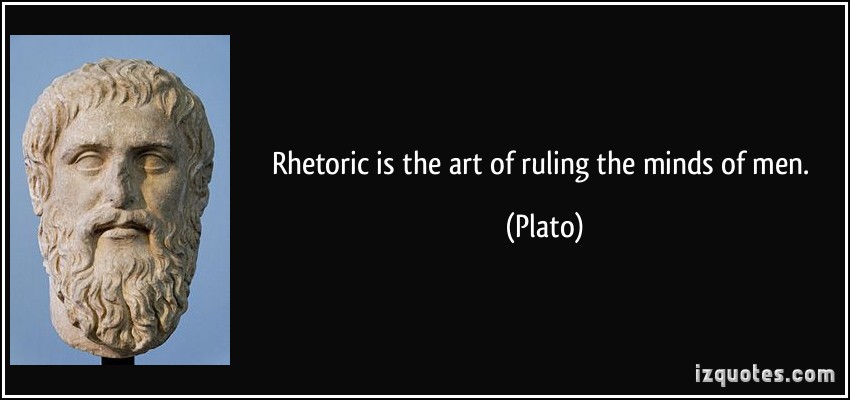
**Rationale:**

AP Summer reading is designed to expose a student to the fundamentals of AP Language and Composition. The course emphasizes the reading and writing of the argumentative format. In this course we find that most situations are rhetorical situations.

**This class is a college-level English class**, and thus, includes a heavy workload, especially outside reading. Be prepared, during the school year, to schedule reading and writing into your study time.

You will read one full-length work, complete several dialectical journal entries, and write one essay during the summer. The summer reading assignment will count as 20% of your first marking period grade. **Students not completing the assignment on time will be placed on probation and potentially dismissed from the course.**

**What is Rhetoric?**



***Plato:***

Rhetoric is the art of winning the soul by discourse.

***Aristotle:***

Rhetoric is the faculty of discovering in any particular case all of the available means of persuasion.

***Quintillian:***

Rhetoric is the art of speaking well.

***Francis Bacon:***

Rhetoric is the application of reason to imagination "for the better moving of the will.

***I.A. Richards:***

Rhetoric is the study of misunderstandings and their remedies.

1. **Summer Reading Choices and Dialectical Journal**

Choose one of the texts from the list below and complete the following assignments (If you would prefer to select a book not on this list, please email one of the teachers to have your selection validated):

* *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* - by Sherry  Turkle
* The Omnivore’s Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals**. Michael Polan**
* *On Writing.* Stephen King.
* *Into the Wild*. Jon Krakuer.
* ***The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains.*  Nicholas Carr.**
* ***Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. Barbara Ehrenreich.**
* ***Outliers.* Malcolm Gladwell.**
* ***The Swerve: How the World Became Modern.* Stephen Greenblatt.**
* ***Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys over Girls, and the Consequences of a World Full of Men.* Mara Hvistendahl .**
* ***The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks.* Rebecca Skloot.**
* *Dirty Wars: The World Is a Battlefield.* Jeremy Scahill.
* *The Noble Hustle*. Colson Whitehead.
* *Quiet.* Susan Cain.
* *Mo Meta Blues.* Amir Questlove.
* *The Grand Design*. Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow.
* *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women*. Naomi Wolf.
* *Feakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*. Steve Levitt.
* *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. Sherry Tuckle.
* *The Better Angels of Our Nature*. Steven Pinker.
* *This is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession.* Daniel Levitin.
* *Overachievers: the Secret Lives of Driven Kids.* Alexandra Robbins.
* *Evicted.* Mathew Desmond
* *Collapse.* Jared Diamond
* *The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace.* Jeff Hobbs
* *Tribe.* Sebastian Junger
* *No Name In the Street.* James Baldwin
* *The Unwinding.* George Packer

**Summer Instagram**

**Please submit ten Instagram or Twitter Posts about your summer reading selection** (pictures and text). Try to be insightful, witty, fun, thoughtful, etc.

Please use the #coopreads and if room permits #coopaplang for these specific tweets. I will be using this hashtag (#coopaplang) throughout the year to communicate with the class.

If you do not have an Instagram account, please submit five extra dialectical journal entries (please see below).



**Dialectical Journals –** These journal entries will be the basis of our conversation and a written analysis regarding the text. **Pay attention to these instructions! You will need to have at least fifteen (15) dialectical journal entries – 20 if you are not tweeting.**

Your journals are a means by which you will develop a better understanding of texts we read in class. These journals will include ideas we discuss in class, your own ideas about the texts we study and your personal relationships with the texts.

Dialectical means “the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer.” So, in essence, you will dialogue with yourself as you journal. You will be having a conversation with the text and with your own thoughts, questions, and insights.

**How to organize your dialectical journal:**

Draw a line down the middle of a piece of notebook paper. The left column, labeled “text” or “note taking” is where you will note direct quotations, citations or write summaries. The right column is used for commenting on left-column notes. Here is where you record your questions, comments and ideas. It should look like this:

**Title of Text**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Significant Passages**  *Note Taking* | **Commentary, Insights, and Reflection**  *Note Making* |
| Here is where you write direct quotes, summaries, images, etc., along with a page number.  You can use a mix of paraphrasing, summary, and direct quotation. Be sure to include the key and significant details or ideas you will be commenting and reflecting on.  Do not use ellipses (…) to skip over any important part of the quote.  Be sure to record the page number in parenthesis at the end of the passage. This follows MLA format (#). | Here is where you comment on the notes.  Let the following questions guide you:   * Why did I copy this passage or make this note? * Why is it important to the audience? * Is there a connection to other text, information, or ideas? * What can I infer? * How does this impact ideas previously presented in the text? * How does this affect the argument? * What does this reveal about the speaker (narrator/author)? |

**Here is an example from last year’s summer reading text, *In Cold Blood*, by Truman Capote:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Note Taking | Note Making |
| “The village of Holcomb stands on the high wheat plains of western Kansas, a lonesome area that other Kansans call “out there.” Some seventy miles east of the Colorado border, the countryside, with its hard blue skies and desert-clean air, has an atmosphere that is rather more Far West than Middle West.” (1) | This passage from the first few lines of the text explains the setting to the reader. “Village” indicates that Holcomb is a small town – words associated with village could also be small-town and quaint. Certainly a variety of images can come to mind. The notion that even Kansans find the town to be “out there” seems to imply that there is an otherness to Holcomb – perhaps to emphasize the extremity of the situation and the crime. The “hard blue skies and desert-clean air” add an element of purity to the setting. |
| “A cinch,” said Dick. “I promise you, honey, we’ll blast hair all over them walls.”  “’Those’ walls,” said Perry. | This brief interaction characterizes Dick and Perry, and their relationship, to a great degree—Dick, the cocky and unfeeling dominant leader; Perry, the persnickety follower concerned about image.  Also, this is where I think the “creative” aspect of creative nonfiction seems most obvious. How could this bit of conversation be pulled from interviews with Dick and Perry? How would this be recollected months later about correcting someone’s word usage? This is an example of a moment when the reportage becomes more like a memoir—it is more about presenting the essence, or “truth,” of these characters than simply the facts. |

**Grading dialectical journals:**

**Exemplary (Grade of an A):** Detailed, meaningful passages and quotations selected. Thoughtful interpretation and commentary about the text includes comments about literary elements such as diction, imagery, syntax, etc. and how these elements contribute to the meaning of the text as a whole. Makes insightful personal connections and asks thought-provoking questions. Coverage of the text is complete and thorough. Journal is neat and organized – student has followed the directions in the organization of the journal.

**Satisfactory (Grade of a B):** Less detailed but meaningful selections present. Some intelligent commentary; addresses some thematic connections. Includes some literary elements, but less on how they contribute to the meaning. Some personal connection; asks pertinent questions. Adequately addresses all parts of the reading assignment. Journal is neat and readable – student followed the directions in the organization of the journal.

**Developing (Grade of a C):** Some detailed or meaningful selections from the text. Most commentary is vague, unsupported, or plot summary. There is some listing of literary elements; virtually no discussion on meaning. Limited personal connection; asks few or obvious questions. Addresses most of the reading assignment, but is not consistent with minimum length requirements. Journal is relatively neat, but may be difficult to read. Student has not followed all directions in journal organization: loose-leaf paper, no columns, not in a separate notebook etc.

**Poor (Grade of a D):** Hardly any detailed or meaningful selections from the text. All notes are summary. There are none or very few literary elements mentioned, and virtually no discussion of meaning. Virtually no or very limited personal connections present; no insightful questions are found, with extremely limited coverage of the text – much too short. Student didn’t follow directions in organizing journal; difficult to read or follow.

1. **Argument Essay**

**You are to write an argument about any topic of your choice.** This is to be a **three pages** typed argument that has been carefully thought out, well-written, and worthy of being called your best work. Additionally, we are hoping that this essay (or the content thereof) can be a stepping stone for the course research project – called the **Inquiry Project**. If you are having trouble thinking about a topic, please e-mail Mr. Wajnowski or Mr. Nelken (see on front page) and we can help you with ideas.

***If you are stuck, here are some potential questions*:**

Possible Topics:

* *What constitutes art? Is everything art?*
* *What does it mean to live a good life? How can one tell?*
* *What is the nature and* purpose *of education?*
* *What is the nature of man?*
* *How would you improve the American Political system?*
* *What are the barriers to education facing many Americans?*
* *What is an American? Do qualities like ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status matter?*
* *Has CGI and special effects ruined movies?*
* *Should we let states secede from the union?*
* *Do Disney movies reinforce gender norms OR racial/ethnic stereotypes?*
* *Should art be free? (Think online piracy and theft?)*
* *Do you believe America’s relationship with the police is crumbling? If so, will that have adverse results? How can it be remedied?*
* *What is the significance of community for an individual in the 21st century?*
* *How do poverty and criminality intersect?*
* *Is America a thriving or declining civilization?*

OR WRITE ABOUT THE TOPIC OF YOUR CHOICE. Feel free to send us an email if you want feedback.

1. **Additional Readings**

**Note to student:** These readings are mandatory and serve as assistance for your summer reading assignment. When doing your summer work, please pair the following reading and assignment as they complement one another:

* **First-Year Writing at UCONN**
  + This handout is from the University of Connecticut and outlines the type of course expectations you should be aware of. Please read this carefully as many of our course expectations will be derived from this overview.
* **What Do Students Need to Know About Rhetoric? & (Part A) Dialectical Journal Entries**
* **The Classical Argument with the (Part B) Argument Essay**

**What Do Students Need to Know About Rhetoric?**

Hepzibah Roskelly

University of North Carolina

Greensboro, North Carolina

The AP Language and Composition Exam places strong emphasis on students’ ability to analyze texts rhetorically and to use rhetoric effectively as they compose essay responses. It’s an important question for teachers, therefore, to consider what students need to know about this often misunderstood term in order to write confidently and skillfully.

The traditional definition of rhetoric, first proposed by Aristotle, and embellished over the centuries by scholars and teachers, is that rhetoric is the art of observing in any given case the “available means of persuasion.”

“The whole process of education for me was learning to put names to things I already knew.” That’s a line spoken by Kinsey Millhone, Sue Grafton’s private investigator in one of her series of alphabet mystery novels, *C is for Corpse.* When I began a graduate program that specialized in rhetoric, I wasn’t quite sure what that word meant. But once I was introduced to it, I realized rhetoric was something I had always known about.

Any of these opening paragraphs might be a suitable way to begin an essay on what students need to know as they begin a course of study that emphasizes rhetoric and prepares them for the AP English Language Exam. The first acknowledges that the question teachers ask about teaching rhetoric is a valid one. The second establishes a working definition and suggests that the writer will rely on classical rhetoric to propose answers to the question. And the third? Perhaps it tells more about the writer than about the subject. She likes mysteries; she knows that many people (including herself when she was a student) don’t know much about the term. But that third opening is the one I choose to begin with. It’s a *rhetorical* decision, based on what I know of myself, of the subject, and of you. I want you to know something of me, and I’d like to begin a conversation with you. I also want to establish my purpose right away, and Millhone’s line states that purpose nicely. Rhetoric is all about giving a name to something we already know a great deal about, and teachers who understand that are well on their way to teaching rhetoric effectively in their classes.

The first thing that students need to know about rhetoric, then, is that it’s all around us in conversation, in movies, in advertisements and books, in body language, and in art. We employ rhetoric whether we’re conscious of it or not, but becoming conscious of how rhetoric works can transform speaking, reading, and writing, making us more successful and able communicators and more discerning audiences. The very *ordinariness* of rhetoric is the single most important tool for teachers to use to help students understand its dynamics and practice them.

Exploring several writers’ definitions of rhetoric will, I hope, reinforce this truth about the commonness of rhetorical practice and provide some useful terms for students as they analyze texts and write their own. The first is Aristotle’s, whose work on rhetoric has been employed by scholars and teachers for centuries, and who teachers still rely on for basic understandings about the rhetorical transaction.

**The Rhetorical Triangle: Subject, Audience, Speaker’s Persona**

Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.

—Aristotle

Aristotle believed that from the world around them, speakers could observe how communication happens and use that understanding to develop sound and convincing arguments. In order to do that, speakers needed to look at three elements, graphically represented by what we now call the rhetorical triangle:



Aristotle said that when a *rhetor* or speaker begins to consider how to compose a speech— that is, begins the process of invention—the speaker must take into account three elements: the *subject,* the *audience,* and the *speaker.* The three elements are connected and interdependent; hence, the triangle.

Considering the *subject* means that the writer/speaker evaluates what he or she knows already and needs to know, investigates perspectives, and determines kinds of evidence or proofs that seem most useful. Students are often taught how to conduct research into a subject and how to support claims with appropriate evidence, and it is the subject point of the triangle that students are most aware of and feel most confident about. But, as Aristotle shows, knowing a subject—the theme of a novel, literary or rhetorical terms, reasons for the Civil War—is only one facet of composing.

Considering the *audience* means speculating about the reader’s expectations, knowledge, and disposition with regard to the subject writers explore. When students respond to an assignment given by a teacher, they have the advantage of knowing a bit of what their audience expects from them because it is often spelled out. “Five to seven pages of error free prose.” “State your thesis clearly and early.” “Use two outside sources.” “Have fun.” All of these instructions suggest to a student writer what the reader expects and will look for; in fact, pointing out directly the rhetoric of assignments we make as teachers is a good way to develop students’ rhetorical understanding. When there is no assignment, writers imagine their readers, and if they follow Aristotle’s definition, they will use their own experience and observation to help them decide on how to communicate with readers.

The use of experience and observation brings Aristotle to the *speaker* point of the triangle. Writers use who they are, what they know and feel, and what they’ve seen and done to find their attitudes toward a subject and their understanding of a reader. Decisions about formal and informal language, the use of narrative or quotations, the tone of familiarity or objectivity, come as a result of writers considering their speaking voices on the page. My opening paragraph, the *exordium*, attempts to give readers insight into me as well as into the subject, and it comes from my experience as a reader who responds to the personal voice. The creation of that voice Aristotle called the *persona*, the character the speaker creates as he or she writes.

Many teachers use the triangle to help students envision the rhetorical situation. Aristotle saw these rhetorical elements coming from lived experience. Speakers knew how to communicate because they spoke and listened, studied, and conversed in the world. Exercises that ask students to observe carefully and comment on rhetorical situations in action—the cover of a magazine, a conversation in the lunchroom, the principal’s address to the student body—reinforce observation and experience as crucial skills for budding rhetoricians as well as help students transfer skills to their writing and interpreting of literary and other texts.

**Appeals to Logos, Pathos, and Ethos**

In order to make the rhetorical relationship—speakers to hearers, hearers to subjects, speakers to subjects—most successful, writers use what Aristotle and his descendants called the *appeals*: logos, ethos, and pathos.

They appeal to a reader’s sense of *logos* when they offer clear, reasonable premises and proofs, when they develop ideas with appropriate details, and when they make sure readers can follow the progression of ideas. The logical thinking that informs speakers’ decisions and readers’ responses forms a large part of the kind of writing students accomplish in school.

Writers use *ethos* when they demonstrate that they are credible, good-willed, and knowledgeable about their subjects, and when they connect their thinking to readers’ own ethical or moral beliefs. Quintilian, a Roman rhetorician and theorist, wrote that the speaker should be the “good man speaking well.” This emphasis on *good* character meant that audiences and speakers could assume the best intentions and the most thoughtful search for truths about an issue. Students’ use of research and quotations is often as much an ethical as a logical appeal, demonstrating to their teachers that their character is thoughtful, meticulous, and hardworking.

When writers draw on the emotions and interests of readers, and highlight them, they use *pathos*, the most powerful appeal and the most immediate—hence its dominance in advertisements. Students foreground this appeal when they use personal stories or observations, sometimes even within the context of analytical writing, where it can work dramatically well to provoke readers’ sympathetic reaction. Figurative language is often used by writers to heighten the emotional connections readers make to the subject. Emily Dickinson’s poem that begins with the metaphor “My life had stood—a loaded gun,” for example, provokes readers’ reactions of fear or dread as they begin to read.

As most teachers teach the appeals, they make sure to note how intertwined the three are. John F. Kennedy’s famous line (an example of the rhetorical trope of *antimetabole,* by the way), “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country,” calls attention to the ethical qualities of both speaker and hearer, begins to propose a solution to some of the country’s ills by enlisting the direct help of its citizens, and calls forth an emotional patriotism toward the country that has already done so much for individuals. Asking students to investigate how appeals work in their own writing highlights the way the elements of diction, imagery, and syntax work to produce persuasive effects, and often makes students conscious of the way they’re unconsciously exercising rhetorical control.

Any text students read can be useful for teachers in teaching these elements of classical rhetoric. Speeches, because they’re immediate in connecting speaker and hearer, provide good illustrations of how rhetorical relationships work. In Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar,* Marc Antony’s speech allows readers to see clearly how appeals intertwine, how a speaker’s persona is established, how aim or purpose controls examples. Sojourner Truth’s repetition of the phrase “Ain’t I a Woman?” shows students the power of repetition and balance in writing as well as the power of gesture (Truth’s gestures to the audience are usually included in texts of the speech). Asking students to look for rhetorical transactions in novels, in poems, in plays, and in nonfiction will expose how rhetorical *all* writing is.

**Context and Purpose**

Rhetoric is what we have instead of omniscience.

—Ann Berthoff

It’s important to note that Aristotle omitted—or confronted only indirectly—two other elements of the rhetorical situation, the *context* in which writing or speaking occurs and the emerging aim or *purpose* that underlies many of the writer’s decisions. In part,

Aristotle and other classical rhetoricians could assume context and aim since all speakers and most hearers were male, upper class, and concerned with addressing important civic, public issues of the day. But these two considerations affect every element of the rhetorical triangle. Some teachers add circles around the triangle or write inside of it to show the importance of these two elements to rhetorical understanding.



Ann Berthoff’s statement suggests the importance of context, the situation in which writing and reading occur, and the way that an exploration of that situation, a rhetorical analysis, can lead to understanding of what underlies writers’ choices. We can’t know for sure what writers mean, Berthoff argues, but we have rhetoric to help us interpret.

The importance of context is especially obvious in comedy and political writing, where controlling ideas are often, maybe even usually, topical, concerned with current events and ideas. One reason comedy is difficult to teach sometimes is that the events alluded to are no longer current for readers and the humor is missed. Teachers who have taught Jonathan Swift’s “A Modest Proposal,” for example, have to fill in the context of the Irish famine and the consequent mind-numbing deprivation in order to have students react appropriately to the black humor of Swift’s solutions to the problem. But using humorist David Sedaris’s essays or Mort Sahl’s political humor or Dorothy Parker’s wry social commentary provides a fine opportunity to ask students to do research on the context in which these pieces were written. Students who understand context learn how and why they write differently in history class and English or biology. And giving students real contexts to write in—letters to the editor, proposals for school reforms, study notes for other students— highlights how context can alter rhetorical choices in form and content.

**Intention**

Rhetoric . . . should be a study of misunderstandings and their remedies.

—I. A. Richards

Richards’s statement reveals how key *intention* or aim is to rhetorical effectiveness.

Words and forms carry writers’ intentions, but, as Richards indicates, those aims can be

miscommunicated. Investigating how readers perceive intentions exposes where and how communication happens or is lost. For Richards, rhetoric is the way to connect intentions with responses, the way to reconcile readers and writers. Intention is sometimes embodied in a thesis statement; certainly, students get lots of practice making those statements clear. *But intention is carried out throughout a piece, and it often changes.* Writing workshops where writers articulate intentions and readers suggest where theyperceive them or lose them give students a way to realize intentions more fully.

Many texts students read can illuminate how intentions may be misperceived as well as communicated effectively. “A Modest Proposal,” for example, is sometimes perceived as horrific by student readers rather than anguished. Jane Addams’s “Bayonet Charge” speech, delivered just before America’s entrance into World War I, provoked a storm of protest when it seemed to many that she was impugning the bravery of fighting soldiers who had to be drugged before they could engage in the mutilation of the bayonet charge. Although she kept restating her intention in later documents, her career was nearly ruined, and her reputation suffered for decades. I use that example (in part because you may not be familiar with it) to show that students can find much to discuss when they examine texts from the perspective of misunderstandings and their remedies.

**Visual Rhetoric**

One way to explore rhetoric in all its pervasiveness and complexity is to make use of the visual. Students are expert rhetoricians when it comes to symbolic gesture, graphic design, and action shots in film. What does Donald Trump’s hand gesture accompanying his straightforward “You’re fired” on the recent “reality” television program *The* *Apprentice* signal? (Notice the topical context I’m using here: perhaps when you read this, this show will no longer be around.) Why does Picasso use color and action in the way he does in his painting *Guernica*? Why are so many Internet sites organized in columns that sometimes compete for attention? Linking the visual to the linguistic, students gain confidence and control as they analyze and produce rhetoric.

**Conclusion**

So what do students need to know about rhetoric? Not so much the names of its tropes and figures, although students often like to hunt for examples of asyndeton or periphrasis, and it is also true that if they can identify them in texts they read they can in turn practice them in their own writing, often to great effect. (If you’re interested in having students do some work with figures of speech and the tropes of classical rhetoric, visit the fine Web site at Brigham Young University developed by Professor Gideon Burton called *Silva Rhetoricae*, literally “the forest of rhetoric” (*humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/silva.htm* that site provides hundreds of terms and definitions of rhetorical figures). However, it’s more important to recognize how figures of speech affect readers and be able to use them effectively to persuade and communicate than it is to identify them, and the exam itself places little emphasis on an ability to name *zeugma* (a figure where one item in a series of parallel constructions in a sentence is governed by a single word), but great emphasis on a student’s ability to write a sentence that shows an awareness of how parallel constructions affect readers’ responses.

Students don’t need to memorize the five canons of classical rhetoric either—invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery—although studying what each of those canons might mean for the composing processes of today’s student writers might initiate provocative conversation about paragraph length, sentence structure, use of repetition, and format of final product.

What students need to know about rhetoric is in many ways what they know already about the way they interact with others and with the world. Teaching the connections between the words they work with in the classroom and the world outside it can challenge and engage students in powerful ways as they find out how much they can use what they know of the available means of persuasion to learn more.

**The Classical Argument**

Adapted from Walter Beale, *Real Writing*, 2nd edition, 1986

One of the oldest organizing devices in rhetoric is the *classical argument*, which incorporates the five parts of a discourse that ancient teachers of rhetoric believed were necessary for persuasion, especially when the audience included a mixture of reactions from favorable to hostile. They often prescribed this order to students, not because it was absolutely ideal, but because using the scheme encouraged the writer to take account of some of the most important elements of composing:

* beginning in an interesting way
* providing background or context that was relevant to their specific audience
* stating their claims and evidence clearly and emphatically
* taking account of opposing viewpoints and anticipating objections
* and concluding in a satisfying and effective way.

The classical argument isn’t a cookie-cutter template: simply filling in the parts does not by itself make you successful. But if you use the structure as a way to make sure you cover all the needs of all parts of your audience, you will find it a very useful heuristic for developing effective arguments.

The classical argument traditionally consists of five parts:

|  |
| --- |
| **In Writing** |
| In writing, the first two parts of the classical argument, ***the introduction and narration*,** are often run together. In speaking, the introduction often served as an “icebreaker” for the audience. Since the writer needs to focus on grabbing and focusing attention rather than making the audience feel comfortable before beginning the argument, a written classical argument usually condenses these two elements into one. Some of the most common devices writers use in a classical introduction are a focusing event or quotation, a question, a statement of a problem or controversy, a representative analogy or case, an attack on an opposing point of view (especially if it’s a more popular one than yours), or a confession or personal introduction. |
| The ***confirmation*,** where you present the *claims* and *evidence* that back up or substantiate the *thesis* of your argument. These claims and evidence are often connected together in a chain of reasoning that link the *reasoning*, *facts and examples, and testimony* (i.e. *inartistic proofs*) that support the main claim you are making. |
| The ***concession and refutation*** sections, which go together, exist because arguments always have more than one side. It is always dangerous to ignore them. Moreover, reasonable audiences often have more than one response to an argument. So considering the opposing viewpoints enables a good arguer to anticipate and respond to the objections that her or his position might raise, and defuse opposition before it gets started. |
| The ***conclusion***, where the writer ties things together, creates a sense of finality or closure, answers the questions or solves the problem stated in the introduction—in other words, “closes the circle” and gives the readers a feeling of completion and balance. Sometimes writers like to add a “final blast”—a big emotional or ethical appeal—that helps sway the audience’s opinion. |

**Let’s look at how these five sections translate into a written classical argument.**

**The Introduction**

 The introduction has four jobs to do:

1. It must attract the interest of a specific audience and focus it on the subject of the argument.
2. It must provide enough background information to make sure that the audience is aware of both the general problem as well as the specific issue or issues the writer is addressing (for instance, not just the problem of pollution but the specific problem of groundwater pollution in Columbia, SC).
3. It must clearly signal the writer’s specific position on the issue and/or the direction of her/his argument. Usually a classical argument has a written *thesis statement* early in the paper—usually in the first paragraph or two.
4. It must establish the writer’s *role* or any special relationship the writer may have to the subject or the audience (for instance, you’re committed to the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure because your mother is a breast cancer survivor). It should also establish the image of the writer (the *ethos*) that he/she wants to project in the argument: caring, aggressive, passionate, etc.

***Some Questions to Ask as You Develop Your Introduction***

1.      What is the situation that this argument responds to?

2.      What elements of background or context need to be presented for this audience? Is this new information or am I just reminding them of matters they already have some familiarity with?

3.      What are the principal issues involved in this argument?

4.      Where do I stand on this issue?

5.      What is the best way to capture and focus the audience’s attention?

6.      What tone should I establish?

7.      What image of myself should I project?

**The Confirmation**

There’s a strong temptation in argument to say “Why should you think so? Because!” and leave it at that. But a rational audience has strong expectations of the kinds of proof you will and will not provide to help it accept your point of view. Most of the arguments used in the confirmation tend to be of the *inartistic* kind, but *artistic proofs* can also be used to support this section.

***Some Questions to Ask as You Develop Your Confirmation***

1. What are the arguments that support my thesis that my audience is most likely to respond to?
2. What arguments that support my thesis is my audience *least likely* to respond to?
3. How can I demonstrate that these are valid arguments?
4. What kind of inartistic proofs does my audience respect and respond well to?
5. Where can I find the facts and testimony that will support my arguments?
6. What kinds of artistic proofs will help reinforce my position?

**The Concession/Refutation**

You want to *concede* any points that you would agree on or that will make your audience more willing to listen to you (as long as they don’t fatally weaken your own side). For instance, you might argue that we need stronger groundwater pollution laws, but concede that we shouldn’t hold cities and municipalities legally liable for cleaning up groundwater that was polluted before the law was passed, if you think that will help sell your case. Again, here is a place to use both *pathos* and *ethos*: by conceding those matters of feeling and values that you can agree on, while stressing the character issues, you can create the opportunity for listening and understanding.

But you will also have to *refute* (that is, counter or out-argue) the points your opposition will make. You can do this in four ways:

1. Show by the use of facts, reasons, and testimony that the opposing point is totally wrong. You must show that the opposing argument is based on incorrect evidence, questionable assumptions, bad reasoning, prejudice, superstition, or ill will.
2. Show that the opposition has some merit but is flawed in some way. For instance, the opposing viewpoint may be true only in some circumstances or within a limited sphere of application, or it may only apply to certain people, groups, or conditions. When you point out the exceptions to the opposition rule, you show that its position is not as valid as its proponents claim it is.
3. Show that the opposition has merits but is outweighed by other considerations. You are claiming, in essence, that truth is relative: when a difficult choice has to be made, we must put first things first. For instance, you may say that it’s undesirable for young girls to have abortions, but when girls as young as ten become pregnant, they’re too young to take on the burdens of motherhood and must not be forced to carry the pregnancy to term. Or you may say that yes, it’s true that my proposal is expensive, but consider the costs if we do *not* undertake it, or how much the price will go up if we wait to undertake it, etc.
4. Show that the reasoning used by the opposition is flawed: in other words, that it contains [*logical fallacies*](http://www.intrepidsoftware.com/fallacy/welcome.htm). For instance, the opposition may claim that anyone who does not support a retaliatory bombing of Afghanistan to punish Osama bin Laden and the regime that supports him is not a patriotic American; you can show that this is an example of the “either/or” fallacy by showing that there are other patriotic responses than nuking a Stone Age country further back into the Stone Age—for instance arresting bin Laden and the Taliban leaders and turning them over to the World Court, bringing them to trial in the US justice system, etc.

In general, strategies 2 and 3 are easier to pull off than strategy 1. Showing that a position is sometimes valid gives the opposition a face-saving “out” and preserves some sense of *common ground*.

***Some Questions to Ask as You Develop Your Concession/Refutation***

1. What are the most important opposing arguments? What concessions can I make and still support my thesis adequately?
2. How can I refute opposing arguments or minimize their significance?
3. What are the possible objections to my own position?
4. What are the possible ways someone can misunderstand my own position?
5. How can I best deal with these objections and misunderstandings?

**The Conclusion**

Conclusions are hard and there’s a temptation to simply repeat your thesis and topic sentences and pray for a miracle. However, if you try to step back in your conclusion, you can often find a way to give a satisfying sense of closure. You might hark back to the background: why has this remained a problem and why is it so important to solve it, your way, now? Or you might hark back to the common ground you have with your audience: why does accepting your argument reinforce your shared beliefs and values? Too many times classical arguments don’t close—they just stop, as if the last page is missing. And this sense of incompleteness leaves readers dissatisfied and sometimes less likely to accept your argument. So spending a little extra time to round the conclusion out is almost always worthwhile in making the argument more successful.

***Some Questions to Ask as You Develop Your Conclusion***

1. How can I best leave a strong impression of the rightness and importance of my view?
2. How can I best summarize or exemplify the most important elements of my argument?
3. What is the larger significance of the argument? What long-range implications will have the most resonance with my readers?
4. How can I bring the argument “full circle” and leave my readers satisfied with the ending of my argument?