PUBLIC SPEAKING & RHETORIC · GRADES 9–12 · QUICK REFERENCE

Public Speaking (Rhetoric · Delivery · Debate)

Grades 9–12 | 3 pages

The three appeals and the five canons, voice and body, invention and the six parts of a classical oration, outlining, the virtues of style and the figures of speech, memory, informative and persuasive speaking, claim, evidence and warrant, the fallacies, impromptu frameworks, debate terms and the thesis defense.

1 Rhetoric | 2 Delivery | 3 Invention & arrangement | 4 Style & memory | 5 Persuasion | 6 Impromptu & debate

1 THE ART OF RHETORIC

unit 1 · the good man speaking well

What rhetoric is

Rhetoric is the art of finding the available means of persuasion (Aristotle) and of speaking well. Quintilian's ideal: *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, **the good man skilled in speaking**. Eloquence serves truth; the speaker's character comes first. "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6).

The three appeals

Appeal	Persuades by	Build it with
Ethos	the speaker's character and credibility	honesty, preparation, fairness to the other side, good will
Pathos	the audience's emotions	stories, vivid images, shared values, fitting feeling
Logos	reason and evidence	claims, facts, examples, sound argument

The five canons

Canon	Latin	Question
Invention	inventio	What shall I say? (find the material: the topics)
Arrangement	dispositio	In what order? (the six parts)
Style	elocutio	In what words? (clear, fitting, memorable)
Memory	memoria	How will I hold it? (memory palace, outline)
Delivery	pronuntiatio	How will I say it? (voice, body, eyes)

MEMORY TRICK **I Am Scared, May I Die**

Invention, **A**rrangement, **S**tyle, **M**emory, **D**elivery: the order of preparing any speech.

Occasion and audience

- Three kinds of speech (Aristotle): **deliberative** (what should we do? the future), **forensic** (what happened? the past, the courtroom), **epideictic** (praise and blame: tributes, toasts, eulogies).
- **Audience analysis:** who are they, what do they know, what do they value, what do they need from you, how long do you have?
- **Decorum:** fit the words and manner to the occasion. A toast is not a sermon.
- Your first speech: introduce a friend in two minutes: name, one story, one thing to admire.

2 DELIVERY: VOICE & BODY

unit 2

The voice

- **Breath:** from the belly, not the shoulders; a full breath before each sentence.
- **Projection:** speak to the back row; volume comes from breath, not from the throat.
- **Pace:** slower than conversation; about 120–150 words a minute. Nerves speed you up.
- **Pause:** silence before a key line and after it; a pause is louder than "um."
- **Inflection:** let the pitch rise and fall with the meaning; avoid a flat drone or a sing-song.
- **Articulation:** finish the consonants; open the mouth.

MEMORY TRICK

Breath, volume, pace, pause

The four dials of the voice. When in doubt: breathe, speak up, slow down, stop.

The body

- **Ready stance:** feet under the shoulders, weight even, knees soft, hands at the sides or at waist height. No swaying, no pacing, no pockets.
- **Presence:** walk to the front with purpose, pause, look at them, then begin. Own the room before you speak.
- **Eye contact:** finish a thought with one person, then move to another; cover the whole room; never read to the floor.
- **Gesture: descriptive** (shows size, shape, direction) and **emphatic** (drives a point); above the waist, open palms, then let the hands rest.
- **Face:** let it match the words; smile at the start and the end.

Notes

A **speaking outline** on one card: key words, not sentences. Hold it low and still, or leave it on the lectern.

Nerves and practice

1. **Prepare** early: nerves shrink as knowledge grows.
2. **Rehearse aloud** standing up, at least three times, once in front of someone.
3. **Time it**; cut until it fits with room to spare.
4. **Record** yourself; in **self-review** note one strength and one fix.
5. Before you begin: breathe slowly, plant your feet, find a friendly face. Nerves are energy; use them.

Reciting a text

Score the text: mark the stresses, the pauses, the rises and falls, the words to color. Learn it by paragraphs, out loud. The Gettysburg Address (272 words) is the course's recitation.

3 INVENTION & ARRANGEMENT

unit 3 · finding and ordering what to say

Invention: the topics (topoi)

Places to look for material: **definition** (what is it?), **comparison** (like what? unlike what? greater or less?), **relationship** (cause and effect, before and after, contraries), **circumstance** (possible? impossible? past fact?), **testimony** (authority, witnesses, statistics, maxims, Scripture, law). Write the **thesis** in one sentence: what you claim and why it matters.

Openings and closings

Attention-getter: a story, a question, a striking fact, a quotation, a vivid picture; then the thesis and a **preview**. **Clincher:** return to the opening, a call to action, a memorable line, a quotation. Never end with "that's it" or "thank you" as the last idea.

The six parts of a classical oration

Part	Latin	Job
Introduction	exordium	win attention and good will; state the subject
Narration	narratio	the background: what happened, the facts
Division	partitio	what is agreed, what is disputed; the points to come
Proof	confirmatio	the arguments and evidence for your side
Refutation	refutatio	answer the other side's best arguments
Conclusion	peroratio	sum up, stir the feelings, ask for the verdict

MEMORY TRICK **ENDPRC**

Exordium, **N**arratio, **D**ivisio (partitio), **P**roof, **R**efutation, **C**onclusion: the shape of Cicero's speeches and of a good one today.

Outlining

- **Full-sentence outline** for planning: thesis; I, II, III main points as complete sentences; A, B support; 1, 2 evidence. Two to four main points.
- **Speaking outline** for delivery: key words and numbers only.
- **Organizing patterns:** chronological, spatial, topical, problem–solution, cause–effect, comparison.
- **Transitions** are signposts: "First… Second… Finally…", "Having seen the cause, consider the cure." Summarize before moving on.
- Rule of three: three points, three examples, three words.

4 STYLE & MEMORY

unit 4 · clear, fitting, memorable words

The virtues of style

- **Correctness:** right words, right grammar.
- **Clarity:** plain words, short sentences, concrete nouns and active verbs; one idea per sentence.
- **Decorum:** fit the audience and occasion (plain, middle or grand style).
- **Ornament:** figures that make the point memorable, used sparingly.
- Prefer the Saxon word to the Latin one: *help*, not *facilitate*. Cut "very," "really," "basically."

MEMORY TRICK

Say it so a child could repeat it

Lincoln at Gettysburg used 272 words, most of one syllable. Clarity is the first courtesy to the hearer.

Figures of speech

Figure	Means	Example
anaphora	repeating the first words	"We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds…" (Churchill)
antithesis	opposites set side by side	"Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."
tricolon	three in a row	"government of the people, by the people, for the people"
alliteration	repeated first sounds	"Peter Piper picked"
climax	rising steps to a peak	"I came, I saw, I conquered."
rhetorical question	a question that needs no answer	"Is life so dear, or peace so sweet…?" (Henry)
metaphor / simile	one thing in terms of another	"the iron curtain" / "like a city on a hill"
parallelism	matching grammar	"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done."

Memory

- **Memory palace** (method of loci): walk a familiar place in your mind and set each point at a station; walk it again to recall them in order.
- **Extemporaneous** speaking: memorize the outline and the first and last sentences; speak the rest from understanding. Not read, not memorized word for word.
- Learn by **chunks**, out loud, at night and again in the morning. Over-learn: ten clean runs.
- Memorize the key lines exactly: the opening, the thesis, each transition, the clincher.

Informative speaking (unit 5)

Teach one thing clearly: define, divide, illustrate, apply. **Visual aids** serve the speech, not the reverse: big, simple, shown then put away. Give **oral citations**: "According to the National Weather Service…". **Storytelling:** a narrative arc (setting, trouble, turn, resolution) with a point; a **tribute** (epideictic, encomium) praises what deserves praise, as Pericles honored the fallen.

5 PERSUASION, ARGUMENT & FALLACIES

unit 6 · claim, evidence, warrant

An argument has three parts (Toulmin)

Part	Question	Example
Claim	what do you want me to believe or do?	Our town should build a library.
Evidence	what are the facts?	Two schools, no library within 20 miles; 300 families signed.
Warrant	why does the evidence support the claim?	Towns with libraries have higher reading scores; a town serves its children.

Monroe's Motivated Sequence

1. **Attention:** wake them up.
2. **Need:** show the problem and that it touches them.
3. **Satisfaction:** present the solution.
4. **Visualization:** picture life with it (and without it).
5. **Action:** tell them exactly what to do now.

Fallacies to avoid and to spot

Fallacy	What it does	Example
ad hominem	attacks the person, not the argument	"He's a bad speller, so his plan is wrong."
straw man	attacks a weaker version of the view	"You want a library? So you want to raise taxes forever?"
false dilemma	pretends only two choices exist	"Either we build it this year or never."
hasty generalization	a few cases → a sweeping rule	"Two kids were loud; kids don't read."
slippery slope	one step must lead to disaster	"A library today, a tax revolt tomorrow."
appeal to popularity	everyone thinks so	"Everybody wants it."
circular reasoning	the claim proves itself	"It's good because it's a good idea."
red herring	changes the subject	"But what about the roads?"
post hoc	after it, therefore because of it	"Scores rose after the fair, so the fair caused it."

Patrick Henry, 1775

"Give me liberty, or give me death!": rhetorical questions in a rising **climax**, antithesis, an appeal to God and to experience, and a direct call to action. Study how he answers the other side before he presses his own.

Persuasive speech checklist

- A thesis you can state in one sentence.
- Evidence you can cite out loud.
- The strongest objection, answered fairly (refutatio).
- Pathos that fits the facts; no manipulation.
- Ethos: you have earned the right to ask.
- A specific **call to action**.

MEMORY TRICK **Be fair to win**

The most persuasive speaker is the one who states the other side so well that its friends nod, and then answers it.

6 IMPROMPTU, DEBATE & THE THESIS DEFENSE

units 7–9

Impromptu frameworks

Name	Steps
PREP	**P**oint · **R**eason · **E**xample · **P**oint again
Past, present, future	how it was, how it is, how it should be
Three reasons	state it; one, two, three; restate
Problem, cause, solution	what is wrong, why, what to do

Use the prep time: pick a framework, write three key words, decide the last line first.

Answering questions

- Listen to the end; pause; **restate** the question briefly so all hear it.
- Answer the question asked, then **bridge** to your point: "…and that is exactly why…".
- If you do not know, say so and offer to find out. Never bluff.
- **Toasts and introductions:** short, warm, specific; end by naming the person and inviting the applause.

Paul at Mars Hill (Acts 17)

Begin on **common ground** ("the unknown god," their own poets), respect the hearers, then move to the claim and the call.

Debate basics

Term	Meaning
resolution	the statement debated: "Resolved: that…"
affirmative / negative	the side for / against the resolution
burden of proof	the affirmative must make the case; the negative must answer it
constructive	the prepared speech that builds the case from **contentions**
cross-examination	questions to the other side: short, pointed, polite
rebuttal	answer their arguments, rebuild yours; no new contentions
ballot	the judge's decision; **flowing** = notes in columns tracking every argument

MEMORY TRICK **Flow it or lose it**

An argument not answered is an argument conceded. Keep the flow sheet; answer every line; then tell the judge why you win.

The senior thesis defense

- A **defense** (disputation) is a presentation of a thesis followed by questions from a **panel**; the oldest exam in the university.
- **Prepare:** a 10–15 minute presentation with a one-sentence **take-home message**, a clean **handout**, and a few simple visuals.
- **Anticipate questions:** list the ten hardest and write short answers; know where you will **concede** and where you will stand.
- **Mock defense** first; on the day, thank the panel, restate each question, answer plainly, close with the take-home message.