

# QUINTILIAN (35-100 C.E.) - RHETORICAL TERMS

Source web site: *Silva Rhetoricae* (The Forest of Rhetoric) - <http://rhetoric.byu.edu>

## 1. exordium

The introduction of a speech, where one announces the subject and purpose of the discourse, and where one usually employs the persuasive appeal of ethos in order to establish credibility with the audience.

**Sources:** Aristotle 3.14; *Ad Herennium* 1.4.6-1.7.11; Cic. *De Inv.* 1.15-18; Cic. *Top.* 25.97; Cic. *De Or.* 2.78-80; Quintilian 4.1

## 2. narratio

The second part of a classical oration, following the introduction or **exordium (1)**. The speaker here provides a narrative account of what has happened and generally explains the nature of the case. Quintilian adds that the *narratio* is followed by the *propositio*, a kind of summary of the issues or a statement of the charge.

See Also: *progymnasmata: narrative*

**Sources:** *Ad Herennium* 1.8.11-1.9.16; Cic. *De Inv.* 1.19-21; Cic. *Top.* 25.97; Cic. *De Or.* 2.80.326-2.81.330; Quintilian 4.2

## 3. partitio

Following the statement of facts, or **narration (2)**, comes the *partitio* or *divisio*. In this section of the oration, the speaker outlines what will follow, in accordance with what's been stated as the status, or point at issue in the case. Quintilian suggests the *partitio* is blended with the *propositio* and also assists *memory*.

Related Figures: *taxis, merismus, diaeresis, dialysis, eutrepismus, prosapodosis, hypozeuxis, distribution.*

**Sources:** *Ad Herennium* 1.10.17; Cic. *De Inv.* 1.22-23; Quintilian 4.5

## 4. confirmatio

Following the division / outline or **partition (3)** comes the main body of the speech where one offers logical arguments as proof. The appeal to logos is emphasized here.

**Sources:** Cic. *De Inv.* 1.24-41; Cic. *De Or.* 3.52-201; Quintilian 5.1-12.

## 5. refutatio

Following the *confirmatio* or section on proof in a classical oration, comes the refutation. As the name connotes, this section of a speech was devoted to answering the counterarguments of one's opponent.

**Sources:** Cic. *De Inv.* 1.42-51; Quintilian 5.13

## 6. peroratio

Following the refutatio and concluding the classical oration, the peroratio conventionally employed appeals through pathos, and often included a summing up (see the figures of summary, below).

Figures of Summary: *accumulatio, anacephalaeosis, complexio, epanodos, epiphonema, symperasma, synathroesmus.*

**Sources:** Cic. *De Inv.* 1.52-56; Cic. *Top.* 25.98-99

## **Additional terms:**

### *accumulatio*

Bringing together various points made throughout a speech and presenting them again in a forceful, climactic way. A blend of summary and climax.

### *anacephalaeosis. (L. complexio)*

A recapitulation of the facts. A kind of summary employed in the *peroratio*.

### *asyndeton*

The omission of conjunctions between clauses, often resulting in a hurried rhythm or vehement effect.

### *congeries*

Piling up words of differing meaning but for a similar emotional effect.

### *diaeresis*

- The logical division of a genus into its species.
- Dividing one syllable into two (especially the pronunciation of two contiguous vowels). A kind of *metaplasm*.

### *dialysis*

- To spell out alternatives, or to present either-or arguments that lead to a conclusion.
- A synonym for *asyndeton*.

### *distributio*

- Assigning roles among or specifying the duties of a list of people, sometimes accompanied by a conclusion.
- Sometimes this term is simply a synonym for *diaeresis* or *merismus*, which are more general figures involving division.

### *epanodos*

- Repeating the main terms of an argument in the course of presenting it.
- Returning to the main theme after a digression.
- Returning to and providing additional detail for items mentioned previously (often using parallelism).

### *epiphonema*

An epigrammatic summary which gathers into a pithy sentence what has preceded. A striking, summarizing reflection.

### *eutrepismus*

Numbering and ordering the parts under consideration. A figure of division, and of ordering.

### *hypozeuxis*

Opposite of *zeugma*. Every clause has its own verb.

### *merismus*

The dividing of a whole into its parts.

## *metaplasma*

A general term for orthographical figures (changes to the spelling of words). This includes alteration of the letters or syllables in single words, including additions, omissions, inversions, and substitutions.

## *progymnasmata: narrative*

Telling narratives was one of the first exercises in a rhetorical education according to Quintilian, and included students retelling a story from the end to the beginning, or from the middle backwards or forwards. From providing students an initial experience in expression, narrative exercises became the building blocks for the *progymnasmata* exercises that followed it (which required summaries, digressions, or narrations of various sorts) and principally for the **narration (2)** portion of a complete practice speech.

### *Directions for Composition*

Students were to take a factual or fictional story from the poets or historians and retell it in their own words, attempting to be clear as to the facts: Who did it / What was done / When it was done / Where it was done / How it was done / Why it was done?

## *propositio*

Coming between the **narratio** and the **partitio** of a classical oration, the *propositio* provides a brief summary of what one is about to speak on, or concisely puts forth the charges or accusation.

## *prosopodosis*

Providing a reason for each division of a statement, the reasons usually following the statement in parallel fashion.

## *symperasma*

A conclusion that includes a brief summary of the foregoing.

## *synathroesmus*

- The conglomeration of many words and expressions either with similar meaning (= *synonymia*) or not (= *congeries*).
- A gathering together of things scattered throughout a speech (= *accumulatio*).

## *taxis*

To divide a subject up into its various components or attributes.

## *zeugma*

A general term describing when one part of speech (most often the main verb, but sometimes a noun) governs two or more other parts of a sentence (often in a series).

## **Sources:**

*Ad Herennium*. [Cicero], *Ad G. Herennium: De ratione dicendi (Rhetorica ad Herennium)*. Trans. Harry Caplan.

Loeb Classical Library, 1954.

Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*. Trans. John Henry Freese. Loeb Classical Library, 1982.

Cic. *De Inv.* [Cicero], *De inventione*. Trans. H.M. Hubbell. Loeb Classical Library, 1949.

Cic. *De Or.* [Cicero], *De oratore*. 2 vols. Trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library, 1942.

Cic. *Top.* [Cicero], *Topica*. Trans. H. M. Hubbell. Loeb Classical Library, 1949.

Quintilian. *Institutio oratoria*. Trans. H. E. Butler. Loeb Classical Library, 1920-22.