

CLASSICAL RHETORIC

Organizing Parts of a Discourse

INTRODUCTION:

Exordium—weaving a web, catching the reader’s attention, the beginning words of one’s discourse. A quotation, personal reference, a story. In speech, a joke.

Narratio—exposition. An account of the history of the case (what gave rise to the present problem; how the issues developed). Background information to bring the reader up to date.

Divisio—outline of points or steps in argument. The controlling idea of an essay, the thesis. Generally one sentence.

BODY OF ESSAY:

Confirmatio—proof / analysis / explanation. Each paragraph in the confirmation should have a topic sentence and should develop the point of the essay.

Confutatio or Refutatio—refutation of the opposing arguments (also may come after the narration or may be interwoven into the confirmation).

CONCLUSION:

Peroratio—the finishing off. Enumerates / sums up / gives solution to the problem or gives the next logical step. Produces the appropriate emotion in the audience. Avoid repeating an obvious position. Of course, if the work is lengthy, technical, and complicated, summing up is appropriate; however, if it is a short essay, summing up insults the reader.

Ethos, Pathos, and Logos

In order to be effective, an argument has to be *persuasive*. Being persuasive means influencing the reader to adopt a certain belief or to act in a certain way. There are three types of persuasion a writer can use to persuade the reader, called The Three Appeals. Most effective arguments combine two or three of these. The Three Appeals are:

- *ethos* the appeal to authority
- *pathos* the appeal to emotion
- *logos* the appeal to logic

Appeal to authority (*ethos*):

In order to write a persuasive argument, the writer must prove to the reader that the information in the essay is credible. The writer must show knowledge of the subject, maintain a reasonable tone, and show fairness by writing about both sides of the argument.

Appeal to emotion (*pathos*):

An argument is more persuasive when it appeals to the reader's emotions.

Appeal to logic (*logos*):

An argument is the appeal to logic or reason. A well-constructed argument convinces the reader that the information in the essay is correct and logical.

