

POWER OF PERSUASION:
ANSWER KEY AND TEACHER GUIDE

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How to use this Teacher's Guide:

Teaching rhetoric is often an imprecise science, so there are places in this answer key where answers are general and the final judgment about whether an exercise has been sufficiently completed will rest with the instructor. That said, the answers and suggestions in this guide are based on real experience and will get you pointed in the right direction.

Each chapter begins with some objectives and a one paragraph commentary on the chapter. These are designed to be a teacher's perspective on what the student is learning in each chapter. The type of summary I provide varies from chapter to chapter: for one chapter I might offer a general overview; on another, I will list several points of practice that ought to be enforced.

Students should not, of course, be required to come up with the word-for-word answers that I have given in this key. My answers are designed to give you an ideal answer. The best answers will look *like* those that I have given (although I do recognize the possibility that a bright student might even come up with a better one). A note about the format of the answers: instructions directed to the teacher are given in italics. The answer you hope to see from the student is given in Roman type.

Theory questions are designed like “study questions” for the chapter, and for this reason the student should always be encouraged to get back into the chapter and look for the answers. Most of the time it will be as simple as finding where the question is addressed; but occasionally, more processing on the part of the student will be necessary.

The **Imitation and Practice** exercises are often even more open ended than the Theory exercises. This leaves the instructor looking for certain kinds of cues to determine how much effort a student is putting into the assignment. The discussion questions for Imitation exercises should help the instructor tell how well a book has been read, and whether the student was able to engage with the material. A number of the Practice exercises provide the student with checklists for completing the assignments. Between these lists and the other suggestions and criteria I've included in this answer key for assessing a writing assignment, even an inexperienced instructor ought to be able to call most of the shots.

Finally, I expect and hope you find this teacher's guide helpful. At the same time, I welcome any suggestions to improve its clarity and usefulness. Please don't hesitate to e-mail or call me (current contact information is available at www.brightrockpress.com).

Chapter 1: Origin and Definition of Rhetoric

Objectives:

1. To give the student a basic introduction to the origin of the study of rhetoric
2. To introduce the most common objection to the study of rhetoric, and provide the student with a working answer to that objection
3. To establish a foundational definition of rhetoric
4. To introduce Aristotle's three kinds of oratory

In this first chapter of this course the student is, in essence, introduced to rhetoric and given a little a little bit of its background. The most important things the student must remember all year are, 1) the definition of rhetoric, 2) Aristotle's response to the common objection that rhetoric is merely the art of flattery, and 3) the three kinds of oratory that Aristotle sets forth. The student should not be overly concerned about trying to understand the exact controversy between Plato and Aristotle. As is often true of historical discussions, it is difficult to understand without an in-depth understanding of the context and the participants.

Exercise 1: Theory

a. Memorize both definitions of rhetoric given in this lesson.

In answer to this question, the student ought to write the definitions from memory.

b. Explain why Aristotle's definition of rhetoric works the way it does.

It is designed to show that rhetoric is a universal art, like dialectic (logic). Rather than being merely the "art of persuasion" where persuasion is the subject of study, it makes the means of persuasion and the rhetorical situation the subjects of study, while still keeping persuasion as the final goal. This helps answer Plato's objection and show how rhetoric, like dialectic, is a universal art.

c. What question has often been asked about rhetoric?

"Is rhetoric an art—that is, a legitimate area of study and practice?" And, "What makes it any better than a base appeal to the emotions?"

d. What does Aristotle answer?

Aristotle argues that rhetoric is a sister art to Dialectic (Logic).

e. What role did the three types of oratory play in the debate?

These three are some specific examples of "given situations" where the "means of persuasion" are to be applied for the good of all.

f. What do sophists do with rhetoric, besides give it a bad name?

They use their ability to persuade for personal gain, without regard for the truth and what is right.

Question for discussion:

Pure rational discourse is conversation or discussion in which emotion and sense play no part—in other words, where a mind speaks to a mind without the interference of desire or distraction. Is pure rational discourse really so laughable? If so, how and why?

This ought to be discussed in a group of at least 3 people. Suggested discussion direction: Explore the tension that exists between a completely objective and a completely subjective presentation of an argument.

Exercise 2: Imitation

Read the first half of the book of Psalms. Notice particularly the beauty of the language. Does Scripture condone the idea that man is a “rational animal”? Notice what the Psalms say about desires in man. Do you think it is good to be moved emotionally by the Psalms? Why or why not?

The completion of the reading is the requirement for this exercise. The questions are to be used for discussion. No set or “correct” answer is expected.

Exercise 3: Practice

Write the definition of rhetoric from memory and then consider each part of it. “Finding the means of persuasion” What does that mean? Make a list of things you think might be “means of persuasion.” “In any given situation” What situation? List three situations in which you might want to be persuasive. Then consider the first section again. What are the means of persuasion you could use in the situations you thought of? Write a short paragraph outlining your thought process.

Have the student follow the example as closely as possible. This will help him to think practically about the rhetorical situation, and about the means of persuasion available in each of the situations he has constructed.