Kolbe Academy
Home School

GRADE SEVEN
CLASSICAL COMPOSITION
Classical Composition, English Composition V&VI
Refutation/Confirmation Stage

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COURSE TITLE: English Composition V/VI: Refutation/Confirmation Stages

Note: Classical Composition Discovering the Skills of Writing Refutation/Confirmation is the fourth course in the Classical Composition sequence. It should be undertaken after completing Classical Composition Fable, Narrative, and Chreia/Maxim.

COURSE TEXTS:
- Classical Composition Discovering the Skills of Writing Refutation/Confirmation Teacher Guide, (RCTG)
- Classical Composition Discovering the Skills of Writing Refutation/Confirmation Student Book (RCSB)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
The Refutation/Confirmation Stage is the fourth of fourteen stages in the Progymnasmata (a set of preparatory exercises originated by the Greeks to ready the student for rhetoric). Students will learn to write by learning to think through the process of refuting (overturning given facts) or confirming (approving given facts) the truth of a narrative by examining it through a series of exercises that are, later on in rhetoric, called Heads of Purpose. In Refutation, the student will examine a narrative and work through Heads of Purpose called: the Discredit, Exposition, Unclear, Implausibility, Impossibility, Inconsistency, Impropriety, Inexpediency, and Epilogue. In Confirmation, the student will examine a narrative and work through exercises called: the Credit, Clarity, Plausibility, Possibility, Consistency, Propriety, Expediency, and Epilogue. The set of exercises in Refutation are the opposite of those in Confirmation.

The instructional method and exercises remain the same from one week to the next and are clearly outlined in the Teacher Guide. The step by step guidance and questions that the parent/teacher asks to help the student write the Refutation/Confirmation are in the Teacher Guide.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
- Develop in the student an appreciation for sound writing
- Inculcate in the student the habits of good writers through imitation of their structure and style
- Provide techniques the student writer can employ for any given writing task
- Prepare the student writer to generate ideas, organize those ideas, and express those ideas well by providing him with structured practice in Invention (generating ideas), Arrangement (organizing ideas), and Decoration (stating the ideas in their most effective form) (Discovery, Organization, and Elocution)
- Develop a shared vocabulary and practice between the teacher and student

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE:
The Progymnasmata exercises were a preliminary series of exercises for students who would later study rhetoric and deliver formal orations. The exercises were developed by the ancients, adopted by the Church, perfected in the Renaissance, and practiced by the West until very recently. The sequence below is based on the exercises of Aphthonius, an ancient Greek rhetorician.

COURSE PLAN METHODOLOGY:
Kolbe Academy has worked diligently to create the best possible course plans with the home schooling family in mind. Remember, however, that our program is intended to be flexible. Under the principle of subsidiarity, you should use these course plans as a suggested course of study. As the teacher, you should adapt and modify these course plans to meet the individual learning needs of your child. In the course plans that follow, the Classical Composition Discovering the Skills of Writing Refutation/Confirmation Teacher Guide is represented by the abbreviation RCTG, the Student Book by the abbreviation RCSB. A weekly grade book is included in the course plan at the end of each week as a convenience; it is a suggestion, not a prescription. Point values and weighting are suggested for convenience and may be modified, dropped completely, or added to as the parent deems fit. Because the Classical Composition course is a self-contained program, we advise you to follow the grading guidelines outlined in the text. You may elect to grade drafts or not. Kolbe Academy does not require that you keep a record of all student work. If you intend to report your child’s work to Kolbe Academy for an official report card, only two samples of graded written work is required per semester for each course, along with the submission of a report card. Please consult the welcome packet for a full tutorial on grades and semester reports. Finally, begin every class with a prayer. This is a good way to help the child memorize new prayers. Repeat the same ones every day until they are known. Be sure to explain the meanings of the prayers. Repetition in all areas of study is most beneficial.

Please note that this course only takes a total of 28 weeks to complete unlike most Kolbe Academy courses that take 36 weeks.

TEACHER PREPARATION:
1. Reading the Teaching Guidelines at the front of the Refutation/Confirmation book should be enough to prepare you to teach this course, because it builds on everything mastered in Fable, Narrative, and Chreia/Maxim; and because the directions are clearly laid out in step-by-step fashion. The ideas found in the “Teaching Guidelines”, “Grading Sheets”, “Definition of Terms”, and “Introduction to Refutation-Confirmation” can be absorbed in an hour’s time.

2. Kolbe Academy has written Refutation/Confirmation Preparatory Notes as a sort of one-stop reference for Refutation/Confirmation. It follows on the next few pages.
REFUTATION-CONFIRMATION PREPARATORY NOTES

Teacher and student alike will feel as though they have reached a plateau on which it will be easy for them to hit their stride as they use everything they know from Fable, Narrative, and Chreia/Maxim to complete the tasks that are part of Refutation/Confirmation. The narratives will have a familiar ring, the Exercises (Heads of Purpose) will seem similar to the Heads of Development that were part of Chreia/Maxim, and the structure of the arguments will unfold in a natural and logical way.

According to Jim Selby, the author of the Classical Composition series, the Refutation/Confirmation stage corresponds “to an argumentative essay in modern composition theory. The students are learning how to structure their thought and hence, their communication process when given the task of arguing for or against an idea, thought, chain of events, method or story.”1

Because the students will be hunting for instances of either discredit/credit, unclarity/clarity, implausibility/plausibility, impossibility/possibility, inconsistency/consistency, impropriety/propriety, and inexpediency/expediency in each story, they will be sharpening their own reasoning skills. Most children enjoy a good argument. In learning to argue in a formal way, they will become savvy analysts of the many “arguments” that come to us through the media and marketplace. Because one day every student will be asked to defend the good, the true and the beautiful, learning to argue well now is very important.

The basic definitions of Refutation/Confirmation as stated by Aphthonius follow:

**Refutation** is the overturning of some given fact. One should use refutation not on things that are perfectly obvious, nor on those that are completely impossible, but on intermediate matters. Those engaged in refutation must first discredit those who make the assertion, then add an exposition of the matter, and use the following heads: **unclarity**, **implausibility**, and in addition **impossibility**, **inconsistency**, **impropriety**; and adduce finally **inexpediency**. This preliminary exercise includes within itself the whole force of the art.2

Continuing with Confirmation, Aphthonius states:

**Confirmation** is the securing of some given fact. One should use confirmation not on things that are perfectly obvious, nor on those that are completely impossible, but on intermediate matters. Those engaged in confirmation should reverse the procedure of refutation and first speak in praise of those who make the assertion, setting out the exposition piecemeal and using the opposite heads: **clarity** instead of unclarity, **plausibility** instead of implausibility, **possibility** instead of

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1 Selby, Jim. Classical Composition Discovering the Skills of Writing Refutation/Confirmation quoting Malcolm Heath, www.leeds.ac.uk/classics/resources/rhetoric/prog-aph.htm, 1.8.10, all translations of Aphthonius’ progymnasmata are from this translator at this site. (Overland Park, KS) 2002. P. 3

2 Selby, Jim. Classical Composition Discovering the Skills of Writing Refutation/Confirmation quoting Malcolm Heath, (Overland Park, KS) 2002. Resources/rhetoric/prog-aph.htm, 1.8.10, all translations of Aphthonius’ progymnasmata are from this translator at this site. Copyright Kolbe Academy 2014 All Rights Reserved
impossibility, consistency instead of inconsistency, propriety instead of impropriety, expediency instead of inexpediency. This exercise includes the whole force of the art.3

Refutation and Confirmation then consist of eight exercises (paragraphs, also Heads of Purpose), taken directly from Aphthonius’ description, that will refine the student’s reasoning and writing as a means of preparing the student for rhetoric and debate. Each one of the exercises that makes up Refutation/Confirmation has a discernible and unvarying pattern. Relying on the pattern, the teacher can guide the student with confidence; internalizing the pattern through repeated practice, the student can build copia, a storehouse of verbal technique.

The students will be refuting or confirming facts and relationships found in narratives or stories. Why refute or confirm arguments based on stories? In the case of the Classical Composition course the answer is, in part, that we do so because Aphthonius did. But, relying on common sense, we can see that examining a story to see what it truly teaches provides great mental exercise for the reader. First, a reader must closely examine the text to assess the underlying assumptions and convictions of the storyteller. In addition, a reader must look for evidence to support any assertions he wishes to make regarding the story, and he must be true to the text in doing so. Further, he must offer reasons for his position in formulating both the refutation and confirmation that he will be writing. An invaluable mental challenge lies in writing both a refutation and confirmation of the same story. Working through this process again and again sharpens the reader’s analytical abilities and broadens his writing technique.

We must also remember that great truths are taught through stories. We could all stand to examine the Parables of Jesus a little more closely, for example. Stories influence people. We have all, at times, stood wringing our hands at a contemporary film or novel that made palatable some modern error, especially those that sin against life. In learning to analyze and respond to a story, a student is learning how to point out errors and stand up for the truth.

3 Selby, Jim. Classical Composition Discovering the Skills of Writing Refutation/Confirmation quoting Malcolm Heath, www.leeds.ac.uk/classics/resources/rhetoric/prog-aph.htm, 1.8.10, all translations of Aphthonius’ progymnasmata are from this translator at this site. (Overland Park, KS) 2002. P. 3

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INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES FOR EACH EXERCISE: A BLUEPRINT
(The following outline is a shortened version of the “Teaching Guidelines” in the Teacher Guide)

I. FIRST STEPS

A. Narrative
   1) Read the narrative.
   2) Answer student questions about individual words and the overall meaning of the story.
   3) Review background information necessary to comprehend the story.

B. Refutation/Confirmation Questions
   Ask the questions and discuss the points given in the Teacher Guide.

II. THE EXERCISES

A. Discredit/Credit
   1a) Discredit poets in general, the author in particular, and the narrative itself if writing a Refutation.
   1b) Credit poets in general, the author in particular, and the narrative itself if writing a Confirmation.
   2) Read the question and model answers.
   3) Have students write their answers, composing their own variation of the model answer.
   4) Have students write a rough draft that includes the assigned figure of description or speech.

B. Exposition
   1) Paraphrase the Narrative if writing a Refutation.
   2) List the 6 narrative components in note form.
   3) Compose a paraphrase and include at least 2 figures of description.

C. Unclear/Clarity
   1) State an argument against or for a particular fact or event from the story.
   Against: Argue that the fact is unclear, has no logical cause, or that the stated cause cannot logically produce the effect. (refutation)
   For: Argue that the fact is clear, has a logical cause, or that the cause logically produces the effect. (confirmation)
   2) Read the question and model answer and let students write a variation.
   3) Write a rough draft that includes the required figure of speech.

D. Implausibility/Plausibility
   1) Argue that a fact from another part of the story is either unlikely (refutation) or likely (confirmation) to have occurred. Plausibility rests on whether something would have happened given the particular circumstances of the story.
   2) Read the question and model answer and let students write a variation.
   3) Write a rough draft that includes the required figure of speech.

E. Impossibility/Possibility
1) Argue that a fact from another part of the story is either impossible (refutation) or possible (confirmation). The possibility of a fact or event rests on whether something could have occurred; the impossibility of a fact or event rests on whether something could not have occurred.
2) Read the question and model answer and let students write a variation.
3) Write a rough draft that includes the required figure of description or speech. Make sure the student is using a variety of figures of description and speech.

F. Inconsistency/Consistency
1) Argue that a fact, perhaps the actions of a single person, from another part of the story demonstrates an inconsistency of character (refutation) or consistency (confirmation). Consistency means that a character is acting in accordance with his nature; inconsistency means that a character is not acting in accordance with his nature.
2) Discuss variations and then write a rough draft that includes two new figures of description.

G. Impropriety/Propriety
1) Argue that a fact from another part of the story, perhaps the actions of a single person, demonstrate impropriety (refutation) or propriety (confirmation). Propriety means something is honorable, decent, respectable, or praiseworthy. In a refutation argue that a person in the story did not act honorably, while in a confirmation essay, argue that the person acted honorably.
2) Discuss possible variations for each sentence as the students write on the lines given, and then allow students to compose their rough draft with the figures of description or speech given in the book.

H. Inexpediency/Expediency
1) Argue that the actions of a certain person are either expedient (refutation) or inexpedient (confirmation). To act expediently means that the action leads to a beneficial, helpful, or efficient result. An expedient action leads to good things; an inexpedient action leads to harmful things.
2) Discuss possible variations for each sentence as the students write on the lines given, and then allow students to compose their rough draft with the figures of description or speech given in the book.

I. Epilogue
In a refutation, the student should end with an admonition calling for an end to the poets, literary nonsense, etc. In a confirmation essay, the student should close with a final praise for the author and for all such stories.

J. Final Draft
Combine all the rough drafts in order.

The teacher guide and student book will walk teacher and student, step-by-step, through every aspect of writing a complete refutation or confirmation. A sample Refutation based on “Giufa and the Judge” is included below so that you can see the scope of what the student will be producing. The sample refutation is taken from the Student Book. Note that the tale itself is retold in paragraph 2.
Model Refutation: Giufa and the Judge (Taken from the Memoria Press Refutation/Confirmation TM)

The tale of Giufa and the Judge fails in many ways. It does not provide a good example for anyone, and in fact discourages people from being honorable. It also lauds the vices of cowardice and dishonesty while diminishing the virtues of bravery and honesty. Though it would be better to simply ignore the tale of “Giufa and the Judge,” it is my responsibility to make clear to all how wretchedly it fails to be a story worth one’s time.

(Discredit)

The story goes that a fool named Giufa was gathering herbs late at night when he noticed the moon disappearing and reappearing behind the clouds. “It appears it appears! It sets, it sets!” He shouted. Some nearby thieves who were skinning a cow they had stolen heard him. Mistaking the voice of Giufa for that of the police, they fled in terror. Giufa, finding the meat they left behind in their hurry, put the stolen booty in his bag and took it home to his mother to sell. His mother went to the market the next day and sold the meat, keeping the money for herself. When Giufa inquired about the sale she fabricated that she had sold it to the flies on credit. When weeks went by without money from the flies, Giufa went to court to try and settle that matter. The judge listened to Giufa’s story and, making light of his troubles, jocularly told him that if he ever saw the flies, he could kill them. Just then, a fly landed on the judge’s nose and Giufa, taking the judge’s word literally, proceeded to kill the fly, smacking the judge soundly on the nose and breaking it.

(Exposition)

We are told Giufa cried out to the moon, “It rises. It sets.” But how can this be? Not even a person simple of mind like Giufa could make such a mistake. If the moon is merely passing behind clouds, then it could not effect the illusion of rising and setting. “But Giufa was just playing a game.” Even children when they play games make use of the materials before them. Giufa could have called out many more accurate phrases than the impossibility ridiculous one the author makes him say. In what game does a person speak nonsense? Games are for rational play, but Giufa’s chant about the moon is not rational. Either irrational babble can be counted a game, or the storyteller is a mad as he makes Giufa out to be!

(Unclarity)

But let us grant that Giufa actually called out such wild things to the moon. Even so, how would the thieves have so easily abandoned the meat? For even if I concede that Giufa would bellow such unrealistic things, still the thieves would not have so quickly left behind their booty. Why would thieves risk the punishment of the law if only to abandon their stolen goods? “The thieves were startled and immediately ran off without a second thought for the meat.” Would the thieves so easily lose their nerve after undergoing the risk and advanced planning required to succeed in theft? Either the thieves enjoy hard labor for nothing, or they were people who had the nerve to plot a clever crime but suddenly lost their mettle for no reason. “But the thieves were frightened for their lives.” Either the rules in these olden days were ridiculously harsh, so that theft merited the death penalty, or these men were more like frightened children, spooked by a silly song sung by the local simpleton.

(Implausibility)

But we will concede that the thieves thoughtlessly abandoned the meat. How, then, did Giufa and his mother take filthy, day-old meat and sell it? Given that meat begins to go bad quickly without refrigeration, there is no way anyone can get money for rotting animal flesh. If sacks used to gather herbs get dirty from the plants, which themselves have been sitting in the dirt, then how would the meat avoid being tarnished by filth? It is, therefore, impossible that Giufa would cut the meat off and put it in his sack, or that it would ever be sold in the marketplace.

(Impossibility)

Why would a mother tell a bald-faced lie to her own son? If a mother is supposed to teach her child how to live a good life and provide a decent example, then how could Giufa’s mother deliberately speak falsehoods to her son? If a mother shows compassion and love to her child, then how could Giufa’s mother try to
deceive him for her own profit? Either Giufa’s mother has no warm blood flowing through her veins, or she is not Giufa’s mother in the first place. (Inconsistency)

Why would the judge become complicit in the mother’s crime and deception? If judges are meant to be the best example of fairness and truth, how could such a magistrate deny recompense to one of the people he has vowed to protect? The judge’s treatment of Giufa was unjust, if indeed a judge is under obligation to seek the truth and to uncover falsehood. (Impropriety)

Why would Giufa make a bad situation worse by assaulting a judge? A person who pleads his case humbly will be heard, but to assault a judge invites judgment. How then could Giufa come to court seeking justice and yet invite judgment on himself? What? Is Giufa in court to seek justice or to have himself imprisoned? (Inexpediency)

Upon considering the story of “Giufa and the Judge,” I heartily discredit the storytellers. (Epilogue)
## FIRST SEMESTER

### WEEK 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Weekly Breakdown</th>
<th>Goals and Notes for the Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| RCSB   | LESSON ONE REFUTATION/CONFIRMATION | Goal: To equip each student with all the skills necessary to effectively communicate through written composition and to prepare them for Rhetoric.  
Review:  
**Figures of Description:** *chorographia*: description of a people, nation, or group; *dendographia*: description of a tree; *hydrographia*: description of water; *effictio*: the description and portrayal of a character  
**Figures of Speech:** *metalepsis*: communicating an idea by a gradual process of logical consequence, a category of synecdoche; a double substitution: work=design=drawing board; *enallage*: changing the form of a word. i.e. changing a noun to a verb; *amplification*: replacing a word with a stronger equivalent; *synecdoche*: using the part to indicate the whole |

**Teaching Tip:** The first two lessons are introductory in nature. Using variation practice, Lesson One introduces the student to the exercises found in Refutation; Lesson Two introduces the exercises found in Confirmation. In these 2 lessons students will actually be paraphrasing Aphthonius’ model Refutation & Confirmation.

### Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Daily Assignments</th>
<th>Parent Daily Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RCSB</td>
<td>REFUTATION PRACTICE BY VARIATION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Follow the guidelines to write the Discredit and Exposition in the Student Book. | A. Preliminaries: Narrative  
1) Read the narrative.  
2) Answer student questions about individual words and the overall meaning of the story.  
3) Review background information necessary to comprehend the story.  
4) Point out that the student is writing a step-by-step variation of a paraphrase of Aphthonius’ Model Refutation. |
|                          | B. Paraphrase/Variation  
Guide the student through the exercises for the Discredit and Exposition in the Student Book. |
|                          | C. Rough Drafts |

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## Course Plan

**Day 2**
- **RCSB**
  - Follow the guidelines to write the Unclarity and Implausibility in the Student Book.
- Guide the student through the exercises for the **Unclarity** and **Implausibility** in the Student Book.

**Day 3**
- **RCSB**
  - Follow the guidelines to write the Impossibility and Inconsistency in the Student Book.
- Guide the student through the exercises for the **Impossibility** and **Inconsistency** in the Student Book.

**Day 4**
- **RCSB**
  - Follow the guidelines to write the Impropriety, Inexpediency, and Epilogue in the Student Book.
- Guide the student through the exercises for the **Impropriety**, **Inexpediency**, and **Epilogue** in the Student Book.

**Day 5**
- Write the final draft.
- Guide the student through writing the **final draft**.

### Week 1 Grade Book

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>(A) Points Earned</th>
<th>(B) Possible Points</th>
<th>A/B x100 = % (C)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<td>Day 2</td>
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<td>Day 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 5: Final Draft</td>
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**Week 1 Average**

Add up column C & divide by number of included ☑ assignments = %
## WEEK 2

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<th>Weekly Breakdown</th>
<th>Goals and Notes for the Week</th>
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<td>LESSON TWO</td>
<td>Goal: To equip each student with all the skills necessary to effectively communicate through written composition and to prepare them for Rhetoric.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>REFUTATION/</td>
<td>Review:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CONFIRMATION</td>
<td>Figures of Description: <strong>geographia:</strong> a vivid description of some feature of the earth; <strong>astrothesia:</strong> a vivid description of the stars or heavens;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Figures of Speech: <strong>aequipollentia:</strong> using the negative and its opposite to gain an effect; <strong>synecdoche:</strong> using the part to indicate the whole; <strong>antonomasia:</strong> a substitution of a name for another name; it may move from the general to the specific or the specific to the general; <strong>periphrasis:</strong> the substitution of a phrase for a name (an expansion of antonomasia)</td>
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### Teaching Tip
As you go along, discuss how the Confirmation of the same tale differs from the Refutation in whole and in part. For example, there is no Exposition.

### Notes

#### Student Daily Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY 1</th>
<th>RCSB Follow the guidelines to write the Credit in the Student Book.</th>
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</thead>
</table>

#### Parent Daily Guidelines

**CONFIRMATION PRACTICE BY VARIATION**

**A. Preliminaries: Narrative**

1) Read the narrative.
2) Answer student questions about individual words and the overall meaning of the story.
3) Review background information necessary to comprehend the story.
4) Point out that the student is writing a step-by-step variation of a paraphrase of Aphthonius’ Model Confirmation.

**B. Paraphrase/Variation**

Guide the student through the exercises for the Credit (no exposition) in the Student Book.

**C. Rough Drafts**

Guide the student through the exercises for the Clarity and Plausibility in the Student Book.
**COURSE PLAN**

**Classical Composition**  
**Grade 7**

| DAY 3 | RCSB  
Follow the guidelines to write the Possibility and Consistency in the Student Book.  
- Guide the student through the exercises for the **Possibility** and **Consistency** in the Student Book. |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------|
| DAY 4 | RCSB  
Follow the guidelines to write the Propriety, Expediency, and Epilogue in the Student Book.  
- Guide the student through the exercises for the **Propriety**, **Expediency**, and **Epilogue** in the Student Book. |
| DAY 5 | Write the final draft.  
- Guide the student through writing the **final draft**. |

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### Week 2 Grade Book

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<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Day 5: Final Draft</td>
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**Week 2 Average**  
Add up column C & divide by number of included ☑ assignments =  
%
## WEEK 3

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<th>Book</th>
<th>Weekly Breakdown</th>
<th>Goals and Notes for the Week</th>
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</table>
| RCSB  | LESSON THREE REFUTATION/CONFIRMATION                | **Goal:** To equip each student with all the skills necessary to effectively communicate through written composition and to prepare them for Rhetoric.  
**Review:**  
Figures of Description: *anemographia*: a vivid description of the wind; *astrothesia*: a vivid description of the stars or heavens; *onomatopoeia*: a word that captures the sound associated with a thing or animal.  
Figures of Speech: *aequipollentia*: using the negative and its opposite to gain an effect; *enallage*: changing the form of a word, i.e. changing a noun to a verb |

### Student Daily Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>RCSB Follow the guidelines to write the Discredit and Exposition in the Student Book.</th>
<th><strong>REFUTATION OF “Giufa and the Judge”</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Day 1 |                                                                                       | 1) Read the narrative.  
2) Answer student questions about individual words and the overall meaning of the story.  
3) Review background information necessary to comprehend the story.  
4) Guide the student through the exercises for the Discredit and Exposition in the Student Book.  
5) Write rough drafts of both. |
| Day 2 | RCSB Follow the guidelines to write the Unclarity and Implausibility in the Student Book. | Guide the student through the exercises for the Unclarity and Implausibility in the Student Book. |
| Day 3 | RCSB Follow the guidelines to write the Impossibility and Inconsistency in the Student Book. | Guide the student through the exercises for the Impossibility and Inconsistency in the Student Book. |