

Kolbe Academy Home School

GRADE SIX CLASSICAL COMPOSITION *Classical Composition*

Chreia/Maxim Stage Discovering the Skills of Writing

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Syllabus	2
II. Chreia/Maxim Teaching Primer	4
III. Daily Course Plan	
A. Quarter 1	18
B. Quarter 2	43
C. Quarter 3	63
D. Quarter 4	81
IV. Quarterly Exams	
A. Quarter 1	
B. Quarter 2	
C. Quarter 3	
D. Quarter 4	
V. Quarterly Exam Answer Keys	
A. Quarter 1 Answer Key	
B. Quarter 2 Answer Key	
C. Quarter 3 Answer Key	
D. Quarter 4 Answer Key	
VI. Appendices	
A. Appendix A: Figures of Description	
B. Appendix B: Figures of Speech	
C. Analogy Practice Sheet	
D. Advanced Sample Rubric for Grading the Final Draft	

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COURSE TITLE: English Composition III & IV: Chreia/Maxim Stage

Note: *Classical Composition Chreia/Maxim Stage Discovering the Skills of Writing* is the third course in the Classical Composition sequence. It should be undertaken after completing *Classical Composition Fable Stage* and *Classical Composition Narrative Stage*.

COURSE TEXTS:

Classical Composition Chreia/Maxim Stage Discovering the Skills of Writing Teacher Guide, (CMTG)
Classical Composition Chreia/Maxim Stage Discovering the Skills of Writing Student Book (CMSB)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The Chreia/Maxim Stage is the third 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 varying a truth under eight heads of development, each forming an exercise, each resembling a paragraph. The **Eight Heads of Development** are: **Encomium** (*praise*), **Paraphrase** (*restatement*), **Cause** (*general story*), **Converse** (*opposite general story*), **Analogy** (*comparison*), **Example** (*specific case*), **Testimony** (*authority*), and **Epilogue** (*conclusion or summary*). The first head of development defines a worthy subject for thought; the second through seventh describes an operation of the mind as it grapples with the truth of the saying; and the last calls the reader to an affirmation of the truth.

The purpose of the **Encomium** is to praise the author of the saying (Chreia) or the saying itself (Maxim); hence, the title of the course. The purpose of the **Paraphrase** is to make the meaning of the saying more clear through paraphrase or variation. The purpose of the **Cause** is to express the meaning of the saying in the form of a general story. The purpose of the **Converse** is to express the meaning of the saying in the form of a general story that applies to real life and illustrates its opposite. The purpose of the **Analogy** is to identify a similarity between the saying and something else. The purpose of the **Example** is to express the meaning of the saying in a specific way. The purpose of the **Testimony** is to provide a supporting quotation from a respected source (In a sense, it is another paraphrase). The purpose of the **Epilogue** is to call the audience to acknowledge the truth of the saying. In each lesson the parent/teacher will remind the student of the purpose of each head of development. 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 chreia/maxim are in the teacher's manuals. A model of the 8 heads of development applied to the 1st lesson's chreia appears below.

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
- ❖ Equip the apprentice writer to become an analytical reader and writer
- ❖ 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, adapted

during the Renaissance, and practiced by the West until very recently. The sequence below is based on the exercises of Aphthonius.

1.Fable	5.Refutation	9.Vituperation	13.Thesis or Theme
2.Narrative	6.Confirmation	10.Comparison	14.Defend/Attack a Law
3.Chreia	7.Commonplace	11.Impersonation	
4.Proverb	8.Encomium	12.Description	

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 Book III: Chreia/Maxim Stage Discovering the Skills of Writing Teacher Manual* is represented by the abbreviation **CMTG**, the *Student Book* by the abbreviation **CMSB**. A weekly grade book is included in the course plan at the end of each week as a convenience. Parents should use the grade book only as a help to their home schooling and not as a hindrance. 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 one sample of graded written work is required per quarter for each course, along with the submission of a report card. Point values and weighting are suggested for convenience and may be modified, dropped completely, or added to as the parent deems fit. Please consult the welcome packet for a full tutorial on grades. 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.

TEACHER PREPARATION:

1. Reading the *Classical Composition Discovering the Skills of Writing Chreia/Maxim Stage Teacher Guide* may be enough to prepare you to teach this course. Read its opening pages and follow its step-by-step instructions with each lesson.
2. Kolbe Academy has written a *Chreia/Maxim Teaching Primer* as a tool to guide you in mastering the scope of what you will be teaching. It can be found on the following pages. It includes explanations of what Chreia/Maxim is, two sample lessons, two sample exercises fully developed, an outline of the 8 Heads of Development, and a list of Teaching Tips.
3. The first lesson includes a copy of a final draft of the opening essay (8 heads of development), based on the answers given on the student pages in the *Teacher Guide*. It is followed by a grade sheet. It is the only lesson with these additional features.

PLEASE NOTE: THE FOLLOWING TEACHING PRIMER WAS DEVELOPED TO AUGMENT THE ORIGINAL SELBY EDITION. THOUGH YOUR MEMORIA TEACHER GUIDE IS ALL YOU NEED, WE HAVE RETAINED THE TEACHING PRIMER TO HELP YOU BUILD BACKGROUND IN CHREIA/MAXIM.

CHREIA/MAXIM TEACHING PRIMER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview of the Chreia Using Isocrates’ Model6

The Eight Heads of Development Using “The Tortoise & The Hare (Chreia).....9

The Eight Heads of Development Using the Life of Maximilian Kolbe (Maxim).....13

Outline Chreia/Maxim Stage.....17

Kolbe Teaching Tips.....18

OVERVIEW OF THE CHREIA

Teacher and student alike may feel as though they are making a quantum leap when they move from the familiar world of Fable and Narrative to the unfamiliar world of *Chreia/Maxim*. The language will sound more formal, the concepts more abstract, the structure more elaborate. However, if you trust to the process you will find that *Chreia/Maxim* truly reflects the pattern of reason that everyone, children included, employ when they want to reflect on something or explain something. The key will be adhering closely to the model to gain mastery of the *Chreia*. The *Chreia* (meaning useful) is a “brief reminiscence referring to some person in a pithy form for the purpose of edification.”¹ By this definition, the student will reflect on that which is edifying by way of learning how to write.

Chreia consists of eight **Heads of Development** (paragraphs) that are exercises in reasoning and writing. Each of the Heads of Development that makes up the *Chreia* has a name and purpose and follows 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 Heads of Development are Encomium, Paraphrase, Cause, Converse, Analogy, Example, Testimony of Ancients (authority), and Epilogue.**

The **Encomium** or praise portion may be thought of as similar to the opening of a speech. It is designed to gain the listener’s attention, acquaint him with the subject of the *chreia*, and set the tone for what follows. Examining the model from the book, and labeling the function of each sentence in it, gives us an understanding of its structure so that we might imitate it with ease. (*Note: Isocrates’ art was that of teaching rhetoric. The study of rhetoric prepared young men for public life.*)

It is right to admire Isocrates for his art, for he gave it a most glorious name and proved its greatness by his practice of it; he made the art famous [ethopoeia], he did not owe his fame to it. (The opening statement praises and demonstrates the worthiness of Isocrates’ art and Isocrates’ practice. It moves from the general (the art) to the specific (Isocrates’ achievement.) To go through the benefits he conferred on human life by giving laws to kings and advice to individuals would be too long; I will speak only of his wise saying on education. (The second statement offers an overall estimate of Isocrates’ work in its first half and a specific focus on his words in its second. It too moves from the general to the specific.) (Encomium)

The **Paraphrase**, as its name suggests, retells the *chreia* in the student’s own words. Paraphrasing is, of course, not new to students of Fable and Narrative. Isocrates’ model follows:

¹“(from “*Silva Rhetoricae*” (<http://humanities.byu./rhetoric/silva.htm> quoted in *Chreia/Maxim Teacher Manual* p. 14).

'The lover of education,' he says, 'labors at first, but those labors end in profit.' **(The first sentence is the actual quotation referred to in the prior exercise. Though not strictly a paraphrase, it goes by that name, named that by better people than this course plan writer.)** That was his wise saying; and we shall show our admiration in what follows. **(The second statement is a statement of transition, readying us for what follows) (Paraphrase)**

The **Cause**, is an explanatory portion that, in the words of Jim Selby, "gives rise to the truth expressed in the *chreia* through a general demonstration of the truth." The emphasis is on the word "general" because the Cause is in fact a general narrative. The Cause also answers the reason why the *chreia* is important. The model from Isocrates follows.

The lovers of education are enrolled with the leaders of education, whom it is fearful to approach though to desert them is foolish; fear always waits on boys, both when they are present and in anticipation. (The narrative begins with a general description of the situation: The students (lovers of education) are enrolled with the teachers (leaders of education), those who represent authority and wisdom. These teachers elicit both fear and anticipation from their students.) From teachers the attendants take over, fearful to behold, more fearful when inflicting punishment. (Those who attend the boys and question them are next.) Fear precedes the experience and punishment follows on fear. What the boys do wrong they punish; what the boys do well they take as a matter of course. Fathers are harsher than attendants, examining their ways, telling them to make progress, viewing the market place with suspicion; and if punishment is needed they take no account of human nature. But by these experiences the boy, when he reaches adulthood, is crowned with virtue. (The movement of this general narrative is from one to another of all those who have anything to do with instructing the young.)(Cause)

(Note: If you've noticed a more severe handling of the young than we subscribe to today, you're right. You may want to use that as a point of discussion with your student.)

The **Converse** states the exact opposite of the object, idea, or action of the *Chreia*.

But if someone, because he fears these things, flees from his teachers, absconds from his parents, avoids his attendants, he is utterly deprived of eloquence; along with his fear he has set aside eloquence. (The converse gives the negative case and shows the consequences for those who ignore instruction in rhetoric.) All these things swayed Isocrates' judgment when he called the root of education bitter. (restatement and transition) (Converse)

The **Analogy** uses a point of similarity between two dissimilar entities (the *chreia* itself and another entity) and explains the relationship between them in order to expand the ground of reasoning and call forth a more exact image or definition in the reader's mind.

For just as those who work the land laboriously sow the seed in the earth and gather the crops with greater joy, in the same way those who strive for education by their toil acquire the

subsequent renown. (Sowing results in reaping crops; sowing the hard work of learning results in reaping recognition or renown.) (Analogy)

The **Example** is a specific narrative that establishes the *chreia* firmly in the reader's mind by offering an example that exemplifies or illustrates the underlying principle.

Consider Demosthenes' career, [Recognition] which was more devoted to toil than that of any orator [Suffering] and more glorious than that of any [Reversal]. (A general statement about the specific example) So great was his commitment that he even deprived his head of its adornment, thinking the best adornment is that from virtue. And he devoted to toil what others devote to enjoyment. (Two statements giving further specific information on the subject.) (Example)

The **Testimony** is an attestation in support of the *chreia*; it is the evidence or proof of the *chreia*'s validity. The testimony is a restatement of the *chreia* by a known authority. However, the Testimony portion is meant to prepare the student for that future time when he will offer expert evidence in support of a thesis.

For this reason one must admire Hesiod, who said that the road to virtue is hard but the summit easy, expressing the same wise judgment as Isocrates. For what Hesiod represented as a road Isocrates called the root; both disclosed the same opinion, though in different words. (The first sentence reiterates Isocrates' idea, the second explains how the two men expressed the same idea.) (Testimony)

The **Epilogue** concludes by calling the audience to acknowledge the truth of the anecdote.

Those who consider these points must admire Isocrates for his outstandingly wise saying on education. (The final statement is a summary of the chreia.) (Epilogue)

The teacher directing the student through the task of composing the eight Heads of Development will be given the *chreia*, the testimony, and the examples in the *Chreia/Maxim Teacher Manual*. The teacher will guide the student through the discovery (generation of ideas) process and the organization (composition) process. Asking discussion questions to generate ideas and pointing out the components of the model will be common practice. Moving from the familiar format of a fable, "The Tortoise & the Hare" (*chreia*) to a saying from Fr. Maximilian Kolbe (*maxim*), we have outlined how instruction using the Heads of Development might take place. Keep in mind that the instruction for *Maxim* is virtually the same as for *Chreia*. In *Chreia* the Heads of Development praise a worthy person, in *Maxim* they praise worthy words.

THE EIGHT HEADS OF DEVELOPMENT
THE TORTOISE & THE HARE
MODEL QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCOVERY PHASE
(GENERATING IDEAS IN AN ORGANIZED WAY)

CHREIA: SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE

Once upon a time there was a hare (RC) who could outrun every animal in the forest. "I'm the fastest creature ever," the hare boasted. "Oh, I could outrun you," said the tortoise. The hare laughed. "You won't be laughing long," said the tortoise. At that the indignant hare challenged the tortoise to a race. The next day the hare insisted that they run the length of an enormous meadow (*topothesia*)(RC). The tortoise agreed. All the forest animals lined up along the path to watch. As expected, the hare soon left the tortoise behind, but the tortoise labored on(S). Some yards before the finish line, the hare said, "I think I'll stop and enjoy the scenery. That old tortoise won't be here for hours." He stretched out among the bright flowers and soon fell asleep. The bystanders were amused. However, when the sun was high in the sky (*chronographia*), the tortoise passed the snoring hare. As the tortoise neared the finish line, such a shout went up from the crowd that the hare was startled from his slumber. When he saw that the tortoise was close to victory, he set off at lightning speed. But it was too late (RV). The tortoise crossed the finish line and won the race.

Moral: Slow and steady win the race.

RC: recognition; RV: reversal; S: suffering

Discovery

I. Discuss the fable and moral. Define any words that you don't know.

II. Identify agent(s), action, time, place, manner, cause, recognition, reversal and suffering.

Agent(s): Tortoise, Hare; Action: a tortoise wins a race against a hare; Time: once upon a time; Place: an imaginary realm; Manner: through patience and dedication a tortoise wins against a fast hare; Cause: to show the virtue of patience and dedication.

III. Read the examples and discuss what they have in common with the characters and moral.

The Sager Children (1844) - crossed the country by themselves after losing their parents and reached Oregon.

The Apostle Paul (1st Century) - endured rejection, imprisonment, shipwreck, and pain to spread the gospel.

Shackleton (1914-17) - led a party to the Antarctic and, when stranded, led every one of his men back to safety.

IV. Read the testimonies and discuss what they have in common with the characters and moral.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." St. Paul

"The Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like hinds' feet, he makes me tread upon high places." The Prophet Zephaniah

"Never, never, never give up." Winston Churchill

"Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising up every time we fail." Ralph Waldo Emerson

V. Ask the student to list with you all the things that he or she finds praiseworthy about the tortoise.

What do we find praiseworthy about Aesop in giving us the tortoise?

1. *The tortoise is unafraid of a challenge.*
2. *The tortoise is patient.*
3. *The tortoise never quits.*
4. *The tortoise keeps going in the face of difficulty.*
5. *The tortoise never complains.*
6. *The tortoise wins against great odds.*

VI. Have the students mark those things that they think they might want to include under one or more of the eight heads.**VII. Write out the eight heads following the *Teacher Guide*.**