Quintilian: *Institutio Oratoria* 3.2-13

Quintilian (35-95 CE) wrote the *Institutio Oratoria* (“The Orator’s Education”) in first-century Rome, the height of the Pax Romana. His views have influenced educational practice ever since, especially in the Renaissance, laying the groundwork for rhetorical instruction until the emphasis in the field shifted from oral to written composition in the nineteenth century.

Rhetoric, or the theory of effective communication, was for Quintilian merely the tool of the broadly educated citizen who was capable of analysis, reflection, and then powerful action in public affairs. Oratorical excellence resulted from native skill as a speaker along with extensive background reading in philosophy and the liberal arts and intensive writing practice, with the goal of producing “a good man skilled at speaking.”

The cradle was not too early to begin this education, according to Quintilian. Supposedly cutting-edge early education approaches today, such as Baby Einstein and LeapFrog, only echo many of the principles this ancient teacher advocated. As the pupil progresses, each step is carefully laid out in his twelve-book instruction manual on how to grow a lawyer.

In the following excerpt, the author outlines the specific qualities a good boy (*probus*) must exhibit in order to become an ideal student. For instance, he must be able to be nurtured and shaped by the superior guidance and talents of a master-teacher, one like Quintilian himself.

*Ingenii signum in parvis praecipuum memoria est: eius duplex virtus, facile percipere et fideliter continere. Proximum imitatio: nam id quoque est docilis naturae; nam probus quoque in primis erit ille verē ingeniosus.*

And I would consider (it) less of a problem for (any) other boy to be slow-witted than ill-behaved: however, the good boy

*[Continued on the next page]*

[1]
illo segni et jacente plurimum aberit. Hic meus quae tradentur non difficulter will be very different from one (who is) slow and lethargic. This (student) of mine will absorb without difficulty what will be taught (to him)

accipiet, quaedam etiam interrogabit: sequetur tamen magis quam praecurrret. and certain things he will even ask about: nevertheless, he will follow (the teacher) rather than get ahead (of the class).

Mihi ille detur puer quem laus excitet, quem gloria iuvet, qui victus fleat. Let that boy be given to me whom praise motivates, whom recognition encourages, who (when) bested, cries.

Hic erit alendus ambitu, hunc mordebit obiurgatio, hunc honor excitabit, in This boy will have to be nourished through his desire for achievement, criticism will sting him, admiration will spur him on,

hoc desidiam numquam verebor. Danda est tamen omnibus aliquaa remissio, in this boy I will never worry about laziness. There must be given to everyone, nevertheless, some leniency,

non solum quia nulla res est quae perferre possit continuum laborem, sed not only because there is no matter which is able to withstand unremitting effort, but also

quod studium discendi voluntate, quae cogi non potest, constat. Modus because the love of learning rests upon a willingness (to learn) which is not able to be compelled.

tamen sit remissionibus, ne aut odium studiorum faciant negatae aut otii Nevertheless, there should be a limit to indulgences, so that either (when they are) denied, they create a dislike of studies or

consuetudinem nimiae. Sunt etiam nonnulli acuendis puerorum ingenii non (when they are) too frequent, (they create) the expectation of leisure. There are even some games (which are) not useless in sharpening boys’ minds.

inutiles lusūs, cum positis invicem cuiusque generis quaestiunculis (especially) when they compete (against one another) with debate questions of every sort posed back and forth.

aemulantur. Mores quoque se inter ludendum simplicius detegunt. Character also reveals itself quite naturally in the course of (their) playing.
Institutio Oratoria: Worksheet

a. The questions below pertain to the forms underlined in the passage (pp. 1-2).

b. When you’re asked to change a word from one form to another, change only that form of the word. For instance, if you’re asked to change habet to the passive voice, make habet passive (i.e. habetur) but leave it in the 3rd sing. present indicative.

1. What case is signum and why? _________________________________________________

2. What case is memoria and why? _______________________________________________

3. Make eius plural (neuter). ____________________________________________________

4. Make percipere perfect (infinitive). ____________________________________________

5. Make imitatio genitive plural. ________________________________________________

6. Make docilis superlative. ____________________________________________________

7. Change erit into a future infinitive (masc. sing. acc.). __________________________

8. Change peius to the superlative degree. _________________________________________

9. Make esse perfect. __________________________________________________________

10. Change mali to the comparative degree. ________________________________________

11. What case is illo and why? __________________________________________________

12. Make iacente plural. ______________________________________________________

13. Make hic dative. __________________________________________________________

14. Make accipiet future perfect passive plural (neut.). _____________________________

15. Make interrogabit passive plural. _____________________________________________

16. Make mihi plural. __________________________________________________________

[Continued on the next page]
17. What case is *quem* and why? __________________________________________________

18. What grammatical construction does *erit alendus* represent? ______________________

19. What case is *omnibus* and why? _______________________________________________

20. What mood is *cogi* and why? __________________________________________________

21. What tense and voice is *negatae*? ______________________________________________

22. Make *acuendis* active. ______________________________________________________

23. What case is *inutiles* and why? ________________________________________________

24. What case is *positis* and why? ________________________________________________

25. What case is *se* and why? ____________________________________________________
### Institutio Oratoria: Notes and Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Line</th>
<th>Note/ Vocabulary</th>
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| 1.   | ingenii: *ingenium*, -ii, n.: natural mental power, mind; here, talent  
|      | praecipuum: *praecipuus*, -a, -um: special; here, principal  
|      | duplex: *duplex*, *duplicis*: two-fold  
|      | facile: (adverb) easily  |
| 2.   | percipere: *percipio*, *percipere*, -cepi, -ceptum: comprehend  
|      | fideliter: adverb of *fidelis*, -e: faithfully; here, accurately  
|      | proximum: *proximus*, -a, -um: next  
|      | imitatio: *imitatio*, -onis, f.: imitation; here, the abstract quality of imitating  
|      | quoque: (adverb/conjunction) also; placed after the word it emphasizes  |
| 3.   | docilis: *docilis*, -e: teachable  
|      | probus: *probus*, -a, -um: good  
|      | primis: *primus*, -a, -um: first; here with *in*, in the earliest years (of a student’s education)  
|      | verē: (adverb) truly  
|      | ingéniosus: *ingeniosus*, -a, -um: gifted  |
| 4.   | peius: comparative adverb; here with *non*, less of a problem  
|      | duxerim: I would consider; perfect active subjunctive 1st sing. of *duco*  
|      | tardi ... ingenii: gen. of characteristic, literally “of slow intelligence”; here, slow-witted  
|      | mali (ingenii): here, ill-behaved  |
| 5.   | segni: *segnis*, -e: slow  
|      | iacente: *iaeco*, -ère, *iacui*: be idle; here, (being) lethargic  
|      | plurimum: (superlative adverb) very  
|      | aberit: *absum*, *abesse*, *afui*: be far removed, be different  
|      | tradentur: *trado*, -ere, -didi, -ditum: teach  
|      | difficulter: (adverb) with difficulty  |
| 6.   | interrogabit: *interrogo* (1): ask  
|      | sequetur: *sequor*, *sequi*, *secutus sum* (deponent verb): he will follow  
|      | magis: (adverb) rather  
|      | praecurreret: *praecurro*, -currere, -cucurri, -cursum: go on ahead  |
| 7.   | detur: let him be given; present passive subjunctive 3rd sing. of *do, dare, dedi, datum*  
|      | excitet: (it) motivates; present active subjunctive 3rd sing. of *excito* (1)  
|      | iuvet: (it) encourages; present active subjunctive 3rd sing. of *iuvo*  
|      | fleat: (he) cries; present active subjunctive 3rd sing. of *fleo, -ere, flevi, fletum*  |

[Continued on the next page]
8. alendus: alo, -ere, alui, altum: nourish
ambitus: ambitus, -ūs, m.: desire for popularity; here, desire for achievement
mordebit: mordeo, -ēre, momordi, morsum: bite; here, sting
obiurgatio: obiurgatio, -onis, f.: reproach; here, criticism
honor: honor, -oris, m.: a mark of respect; here, recognition

9. desidiam: desidia, -ae, f.: idleness
vereor: vereor, -eri, veritus sum (deponent verb); I will worry
remissio: remissio, -onis, f.: leniency, indulgence

10. quia: (conjunction) because
perferre: perfero, perferre, pertuli, perlatum: stand
continuum: continuus, -a, -um: unremitting

11. discendi: disco, -ere, didici: learn; genitive gerund (verbal noun); here, of learning
voluntate: voluntas, -tatis, f.: willingness
cogi: cogo, -ere, coegi, coactum: compel
constat: consto, -are, -stiti, -statum: rest on
modus: modus, -i, m.: limit

12. sit: there should be; present subjunctive 3rd sing. of sum
ne: (conjunction) lest, not
odium: odium, -ii, n.: dislike
faciant: with ne, so that they do not create; present active subjunctive 3rd pl. of facio

13. consuetudinem: consuetudo, -tudinis, f.: habit; here, expectation
nimiae: nimius, -a, -um: too frequent
nonnulli: nonnullus, -a, -um: several
acuendis: acuo, acuere, acui, acutum: sharpen to a point; here with ingenius, in sharpening the minds

14. inutiles: inutilis, -e: useless
lusus: lusus, -ūs, m.: game
cum: (conjunction) when
positis: pono, -ere, posui, positum: put, pose
invicem: (adverb) back and forth
quaesitunculis: quaestiuncula, -ae, f.: a little question (diminutive of quaestio, “question”)

15. aemulantur: aemulor, -ari (deponent verb): they compete
inter ludendum: ludo,-ere, lusi, lusum: play; neuter accusative gerund (verbal noun); here, in the course of (their) playing
simplicius: quite naturally; comparative adverb of simplex, simplicis (“simple”)
detegunt: detego, -ere, -texi, -tectum: reveal