

## 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  
In children, the principal sign of talent is memory. (Its) quality is two-fold, to understand (things)

percipere et fideliter continere. Proximum imitatio: nam id quoque est  
easily and to retain (them) accurately. Next (is) the ability to imitate: for that is also a part

docilis naturae; nam probus quoque in primis erit ille ver\_ ingeniosus.  
of a teachable character; for a good boy also will be the one in his earliest years (who seems)  
truly gifted.

Alioque non peius duxerim tardi esse ingeni quam mali: probus autem ab  
And I would consider (it) less of a problem for (any) other boy to be slow-witted than ill-  
behaved: however, the good boy

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illo segni et iacente plurimum aberit. Hic meus quae tradentur non difficulter 5  
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 praecurret.  
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 iuuet, 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 aliqua 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 10  
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 ingeniis 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. 15  
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 3<sup>rd</sup> sing. present indicative.

1. Make **signum** plural. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Change **est** to a future infinitive (neut.). \_\_\_\_\_
3. Make **eius** nominative. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Make **continere** passive. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Make **primis** comparative. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Make **ingeniosus** superlative. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Make **peius** positive. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Change **iacente** to future passive. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Make **hic** accusative. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Change **accipiet** to imperfect second person plural. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Make **quaedam** singular. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Change **interrogabit** to pluperfect passive (masc.). \_\_\_\_\_
13. Make **ille** dative. \_\_\_\_\_
14. What case is **quem** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Make **alendus** active. \_\_\_\_\_

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16. What grammatical construction does **Danda est** represent? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Change **nulla res** to accusative plural. \_\_\_\_\_
18. Change **quae** to dative plural. \_\_\_\_\_
19. What mood is **cogi** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Make **faciant** perfect. \_\_\_\_\_
21. Make **lusūs** genitive. \_\_\_\_\_
22. Make **generis** plural. \_\_\_\_\_
23. What case is **quaestiunculis** and why? \_\_\_\_\_
24. Make **se** dative. \_\_\_\_\_
25. Make **detegunt** future first person. \_\_\_\_\_

## *Institutio Oratoria*: Notes and Vocabulary

### Line   Note/ Vocabulary

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)  
**ver\_**: (adverb) truly  
**ingeniosus**: *ingeniosus*, -a, -um: gifted
  
4.    **peius**: comparative adverb; here with *non*, less of a problem  
**duxerim**: I would consider; perfect active subjunctive 1<sup>st</sup> 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**: *iaceo*, -\_re, *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  
**praecurret**: *praecurro*, -currere, -cucurri, -cursum: go on ahead
  
7.    **detur**: let him be given; present passive subjunctive 3<sup>rd</sup> sing. of *do*, *dare*, *dedi*, *datum*  
**excitet**: (it) motivates; present active subjunctive 3<sup>rd</sup> sing. of *excito* (1)  
**iuvet**: (it) encourages; present active subjunctive 3<sup>rd</sup> sing. of *iuvo*  
**fleat**: (he) cries; present active subjunctive 3<sup>rd</sup> sing. of *fleo*, -ere, *flevi*, *fletum*

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8. **alendus:** *alo, -ere, alui, altum*: nourish  
**ambitu:** *ambitus, -s, m.*: desire for popularity; here, desire for achievement  
**mordebit:** *mordeo, -re, 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  
**verebor:** *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 3<sup>rd</sup> sing. of *sum*  
**ne:** (conjunction) lest, not  
**odium:** *odium, -ii, n.*: dislike  
**faciant:** with *ne*, so that they do not create; present active subjunctive 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 *ingeniis*, in sharpening the minds
14. **inutiles:** *inutilis, -e*: useless  
**lusus:** *lusus, -s, m.*: game  
**cum:** (conjunction) when  
**positis:** *pono, -ere, posui, positum*: put, pose  
**invicem:** (adverb) back and forth  
**quaestiunculis:** *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