

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions):

**1. *At what age should we start the exercises?***

At Whitefield Academy we begin the exercise in the Fourth grade. We spend the first half of the year in Fable and then spend the second half in Narrative. We repeat this sequence again in the fifth grade. (However, this schedule may change slightly in the future. Our third grade teacher has become somewhat envious of the older students' enthusiasm for writing and is talking about doing some Fable next year with her class). These series of exercises are progressive and sequential. When I came to Whitefield two years ago all our students from the fourth grade to the twelfth started with the Fable stage. The older students moved much more quickly with the 10th-12th graders completing all the stages in two years.

Ideally, the scope and sequence would be as follows:

4<sup>th</sup> Grade- Fable

5<sup>th</sup> Grade- Narrative

6<sup>th</sup> Grade- Chreia/Maxim, may begin Refutation/Confirmation

7<sup>th</sup> Grade- Refutation/Confirmation, Common Topic, may begin Encomium/Invective/Comparison

8<sup>th</sup> Grade- Encomium/Invective/Comparison, may begin Characterization and Description

9<sup>th</sup> Grade- Characterization and Description, Thesis/Law

**2. *My students are entering 9th & 10th grades, so I'm hoping to get through the early levels fairly quickly. They've both done Writing Strands for a few years. What do you think our progress might be if we spend 30-45 min per day, 5 days per week?***

Two years ago at Whitefield we started the 9th-12th graders in the Fable stage and have gotten through thirteen stages in two years. Your 9th and 10th graders should be able to keep the same schedule. Move rather quickly through the Fable and Narrative (spend more time with the Narrative exercises at this older age). Key skills are the figures of description and the six narrative modes (Agent, Action, Time, Place, Manner,

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Cause). Progress when your students have mastered the skills and begin to find the exercises tedious.

Spend the majority of your time this first year in the next four stages (Chreia, Maxim, Refutation, and Confirmation) even to the point of the students finding the exercises tedious! You can reinforce these exercises by assigning essays in other subjects (Bible, History, Literature, Logic, etc.) using the exercise forms they have mastered or on which they are currently working.

**3. *What are the student workbooks like? Are they necessary to teach the curriculum?***

The workbooks have become an integral part of the instruction process, especially as you advance through the curriculum. I highly recommend their use.

**4. *What happens when I click on "add to cart?" Do you accept paypal, or charge card only?***

When you click on "add to cart" you will get a paypal registration screen. Once you

register (they have not "sold" my information as I do not get spammed) you may then pay for your purchases with a charge card or you can deposit money into your paypal account to pay for items.

***5. What do you recommend for formal rhetoric study? Where will we go after we finish the Progymnasmata?***

After the Progymnasmata there are a number of possibilities. There are several college texts that could be used (Corbett, Edward P. J., Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student. may be the best known). I am also teaching Rhetoric at Whitefield and beginning to write up a Teacher's Manual similar to our Progymnasmata curriculum. For first year Rhetoric we are using Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, other of His messages, and some writings from Paul and John (for truth); Aristotle's The Rhetoric (for scope and sequence); and selected essays and speeches (for imitation). My first year Rhetoric text should be ready by this time next year but, as I mentioned, there are a number of possible resources already published.

***6. Where can I find more information on the figures of description and how do they relate to "Recognition" in fables and narratives?***

My understanding of the figures of description came from Giddeon Burton at BYU. The website may be found at <http://humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/silva.htm>. We have simplified his presentation somewhat and he does not have many examples but he is the source for my use of the figures in the curriculum. You are not alone in your occasionally befuddlement. We have spent a lot of time as a faculty thinking through these figures and how they should be used.

The figures tie into the idea of recognition as a way of engaging the imagination of the reader. The more fully a reader's imagination is engaged in a story the greater the effect the story will have on him. When Aristotle uses the term in his Poetics he is describing the point at which an audience suddenly understands the truth of a drama. His example (I believe) is when we finally "see" or "recognize" that Oedipus actually murdered his father and married his mother! That sudden understanding is a recognition of the truth of reality. The figures of description function in the same way but on a much less dramatic and a much smaller scale. With the figures we learn to describe some person, place or thing in a way that triggers understanding in the imagination of the reader. I could speak of a "farmyard surrounded by trees." The image will engage a less than distinct memory picture or "recognition" than if I write a more vivid or effective dendographia. "Tall, white poplars shrouded in green lined the outside edge of the farmyard" creates a more distinct picture or recognition in a readers mind. Such recognition is pleasing to us (see Poetics, though I do not remember the exact reference). By our teaching and the students' subsequent use of the figures they become more aware of ways to describe basic elements of human experience that may be easily incorporated into their stories.