

EDITED BY KRISTA RATCLIFFE

A Reader for Marquette University's
First-Year English Program

CRITICAL LITERACIES

THIRD EDITION

RHETCOMP 1:

Academic Literacy

RHETCOMP 2:

Public Sphere Literacy

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CRITICAL LITERACIES

Academic & Public Spheres

The First-Year English Program at Marquette University is designed to help you learn to communicate effectively. To that end, the program develops your reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills via **critical literacy**, which is the ability to express ideas, values and beliefs effectively in a variety of situations.

To foster Critical Literacy, the FYE Program offers a two-course writing sequence:

Rhetoric and Composition 1 (Academic Literacy): *you will learn to*

- (1) Recognize & analyze literacy practices in academic disciplines.
- (2) Assume the *ethos* of a university student who can enter academic conversations and assert his/her own stance.
- (3) Employ strategies of exposition, analysis, critique, & argument.
- (4) Write academic essays that are well-organized, well-reasoned and well-supported with evidence.
- (5) Address academic audiences.
- (6) Find, evaluate & integrate sources into papers, using MLA citation.
- (7) Write clear & concise sentences in an appropriate academic style.

Rhetoric and Composition 2 (Public Sphere Literacy): *you will learn to*

- (1) Recognize & analyze multiple literacy practices in the public sphere.
- (2) Assume the *ethos* of a citizen who can engage public debates for the greater good of all.
- (3) Write in multiple genres (e.g., thesis-support essays, journalistic essays, business documents, oral presentations) that are well-organized, well-reasoned, and well-supported with evidence.
- (4) Address public audiences (e.g., general readers of *Newsweek* and workplace supervisors).
- (5) Find, evaluate & integrate sources into papers, using APA style.
- (6) Write clear and concise sentences in a style appropriate to public contexts and audiences.
- (7) Compose and deliver oral presentations for a listening audience.

CRITICAL LITERACIES

Marquette University's FYE Program offers you ways of understanding the world and acting within your communities, via language, for the greater good of all. As such, the FYE Program is in keeping with MU's Jesuit mission of creating men and women for others.

RhetComp 1: Academic Literacy

Unit One: Academic Exposition

Unit Two: Academic Analysis

Unit Three: Academic Critique

Unit Four: Academic Argument

Unit Five: Academic Reflection & Essay Exams

RhetComp 2: Public Sphere Literacy

Unit One: Media Literacy

Unit Two: Narrative Literacy

Unit Three: Civic Literacy

Unit Four: Workplace Literacy

Unit Five: Academic Reflection & Essay Exams

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INTRODUCTION

1. What Is the Purpose of This Textbook?

The purpose of this textbook is to help you learn to communicate effectively within two contexts: the academic sphere and the public sphere. The **academic sphere** encompasses your life as a student within the university; the **public sphere** encompasses your life as a citizen beyond the university. Learning to communicate effectively in these two contexts means learning multiple ways to **read, write, speak, and listen**. If there were only one way of speaking or writing that worked in every situation, then learning to communicate effectively would be simple. But as you know, you do not talk to a prospective employer in the same way that you talk to your friends, and you do not write an email to your parents in the same way that you write an academic history paper. Because *Critical Literacies* cannot cover all the communication situations that you will ever encounter in your life, it provides you with rhetorical tactics for teaching yourself to think critically. The purpose of this textbook, then, is to help you learn not simply *how to read, write, speak, and listen* but also *how to think critically about these skills* so that you can *teach yourself to communicate effectively with your audiences* in different situations, both academic and public.

This ability to adapt your communication effectively in both academic and public spheres will make you rhetorically savvy. Being rhetorically savvy does *not* mean telling an audience what you think they want to hear. Such a move is, at best, parroting and, at worst, pandering. Instead, being rhetorically savvy means *presenting your ideas and beliefs* in ways that enable your audience to hear and understand you. To be rhetorically savvy, you need to be able to employ general communication conventions, such as appropriate topic selection, logical organization of ideas, and clear sentence style. Even more importantly, you need to be able to adapt these general conventions to specific situations. According to a famous Roman rhetorician named Quintilian, this ability to adapt your writing to specific situations is called *facilitas*. Today another name for this ability is **critical literacy**.

II. What Do the Terms *Critical Literacy* and *Critical Literacies* Mean?

To understand what *critical literacy* entails and what its plural form *critical literacies* might mean, let's examine each term. For most people, the word **literacy**

means knowing how to read and, perhaps, knowing how to write, speak, and listen. But literacy also means knowing how to *use* your reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills to navigate different communities successfully. After all, knowing how to read is not much use unless you can employ that skill successfully to navigate subway systems and workplaces, not to mention university courses. The plural form *literacies* implies that your daily life is informed by many different kinds of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. For example, some literacies that permeate your life as a student and as a citizen are print literacy, visual literacy, computer literacy, academic literacy, political literacy, media literacy, social literacy, cultural literacy, and workplace literacy, to name only a few.

When paired with the words *literacy* and *literacies*, the word *critical* implies both necessity and critical thinking. In terms of necessity, the term *critical literacies* refers to the multiple literacies that are necessary to your success as a student and citizen. In terms of critical thinking, *critical literacy* refers to your ability to adapt your reading, writing, speaking, and listening to specific situations. In educational circles, the term *critical literacy* is frequently associated with a revolutionary Brazilian educator named Paulo Freire, who taught Brazilian peasants to develop a critical consciousness (via language awareness) and to use that consciousness to revise the oppressive, poverty-ridden conditions of their daily lives. Although this textbook acknowledges the intellectual debt owed to Freire for his concept of critical literacy, this textbook does not demand that you adopt Freire's political views (although you certainly may if you choose). It does, however, demand that you develop a critical consciousness (via language awareness) so that you can articulate *your own* views on a variety of issues via reading, writing, speaking and listening in ways that are effective for academic and public spheres.

In both spheres, a common means of communicating is obviously via language. When language is in use among people, it is called **discourse**. A **discourse community** is a group of people who are bound together by common interests *and* who use language in similar, though not identical, ways. In the academic sphere, English professors form one discourse community, and engineering professors form another; in the public sphere, advertisers form one discourse community, and accountants form another. Each discourse community has its own **discourse conventions**—e.g., a specialized language and a set of commonly agreed-upon “rules” for selecting topics, organizing ideas, and stylizing sentences. For example, in the university, specific discourse conventions are associated with English thesis-support essays; in the public sphere, specific discourse conventions are associated with TV advertisements. In this textbook, you will study discourse communities and their conventions in both spheres as well as ways for you to *use these conventions to assert your own voice*.

What is important to remember about discourse communities is that each of us belongs to many different ones—family, work, friends, church, volunteer organizations, sports fans, nation, etc. Consequently, everyone is literate in many different discourse conventions. For example, you know the proper way

to IM friends versus the proper way to communicate with your teacher in the classroom. But throughout your life you will be put in positions of joining new discourse communities and learning their conventions. For example, when you get a job after college, you will need to learn to employ the conventions appropriate to your workplace—i.e., the professional terminology, topics, genres, and styles.

Sometimes your existing discourse communities may overlap as when a co-worker is also a friend. If you go to a Red Sox game with that co-worker/friend, you may talk to her about work, using discourse conventions of your workplace (e.g., the professional terminology and the logic associated with your profession). You may also address her as a Sox fan, using discourse conventions of Sox fans (e.g., discussing, in a spirited yet informal manner, team rosters, players' RBI's and the now-defunct Babe Ruth curse). But sometimes your discourse communities will not overlap. That is, if you happen to chat with a stranger sitting in front of you at the Sox game, you'll probably talk to him about the game, not about how to pitch an account to clients at work.

The key to being an effective communicator is being able to code-shift among different communities, employing discourse conventions that are effective within each community. Effective code-shifting enables you to express your ideas and beliefs in ways that your audiences can both hear you and understand you. Code-shifting is the essence of critical literacy. But you can only code-shift if you understand the codes, or discourse conventions. With this idea in mind, the term *critical literacy* takes on a more specific meaning. It refers to your ability to *recognize, analyze, employ* and, when necessary, *interrupt* discourse conventions (e.g., accepted topics, genres, and styles) within particular discourse communities (e.g., home, work, church, school). For example, an academic history essay requires different writing conventions than an academic chemistry report, and both require different writing conventions than a letter to the editor or a business report.

Learning to *employ* discourse conventions does not mean that you read or write or speak or listen exactly like everyone else who is part of your community; it does mean, however, that members of your community share a shorthand and sense of appropriateness about *what* can be said or written (content) and *how* it can be said or written (form). Should you choose not to employ a community's existing discourse conventions, you do have the option to *interrupt* them. Interrupting discourse conventions can promote positive changes, but interrupting always has a cost. When Martin Luther King interrupted U.S. conventions about what could be said publicly about race and civil rights, the civil rights movement gained momentum, but the cost was his life. Although you probably will not face such extreme consequences in your life, if you turn in a thesis-support essay in the workplace instead of a business report, your cost may be a demotion or the loss of your job. Grounded in these ideas, this textbook is designed to help you develop tactics for effective thinking and communicating so that you may teach yourself to present your own ideas and beliefs effectively, whether you find yourself in an academic or public sphere.

III. What Is Academic Sphere Literacy?

Academic literacy refers to the critical thinking, reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills that are expected from well-rounded university students. Academic literacy means being able to function and communicate effectively within different university contexts, particularly in different courses. Remember, though, that no one is born with academic literacy. It is learned, and it can be learned at any stage in your life.

In the university, each academic discipline (e.g., English, Accounting, Engineering, Physics, and Theology) is a separate **discourse community**, and each discourse community possesses certain **discourse conventions**. These conventions enable members to communicate with each other and to reason together about issues related to their fields. To become academically literate, you have to be able to recognize **academic discourse(s)**, i.e., the kinds of reading, writing, speaking, and listening that occur within a university. And there are **multiple levels of academic discourse**.

1. **Scholar to scholar**—the ways that scholars in a specific field (e.g., engineering professors) communicate with each other in scholarly journals and at scholarly conferences.
2. **Scholar/teachers to majors**—the ways that teachers and upper-division undergraduate majors (e.g., sociology professors and sociology majors) communicate with each other about their fields of study.
3. **Scholar/teachers to non-majors**—the ways that teachers and non-majors communicate with each other.

Given that most of you using this textbook are beginning college students, *Critical Literacies* focuses primarily on this third level.

The rhetorical skills that you learn here, however, will help you later in your academic career. When you take lower-division courses, you will achieve a general understanding of those disciplines' discourse communities and conventions. When you select a major, you will become thoroughly versed in your major's discourse community and its accompanying discourse conventions, specifically its professional terminology, its ways of reasoning, its genres for communicating, and its writing/speaking styles. Conversely, if you never take a course in a field, you may find its terminologies and its ways of reasoning and communicating a bit incomprehensible. (Consequently, after you graduate, you may have to pay lawyers and architects and accountants for the expertise you lack.)

How do academic discourse communities and discourse conventions affect your studying in the university? As a student attempting to acquire academic literacy within a variety of courses, you need to realize that academic literacy is manifested differently in different academic disciplines. Your success in college depends upon your ability to adapt to different conventions in the different courses that you will take. For example, English professors may invoke the

terms *narrator* and *heteroglossia* and discuss the uses of these terms for analyzing novels; they may ask you to write thesis-support essays that include fat, well-developed paragraphs containing your ideas plus lots of details from the novels that serve as evidence for your ideas. Accounting professors may invoke the terms *assets*, *liabilities*, and *capital* and discuss the uses of these terms for analyzing the financial health of a business; they may ask you to write balance sheets with multiple columns of numbers and business reports with short, concise sentences and paragraphs. If these terms and their uses are unfamiliar to you, that is simply proof that you are not yet part of those discourse communities.

Professors within particular academic discourse communities may interpret their own disciplinary conventions a little differently, so you need to identify not just the discourse conventions of a given academic discipline but also the way these conventions are interpreted by individual professors. For example, in terms of the topic selection convention, while all English professors no doubt agree that you should write papers about their class's assigned texts, some English professors may want you to write about a novel and its cultural contexts while others may want you to write only about the novel. At some level, you already know this. That is why, when a teacher gives you a writing assignment, you often ask "What do you want?" What you are actually asking is "What discourse conventions do you want me to follow?"

Critical Literacies helps you learn to ask that question effectively and to answer it. In addition, this textbook also encourages you to imagine how you might adapt academic strategies to the public sphere.

IV. What Is Public Sphere Literacy?

Public sphere literacy refers to the critical thinking, reading, writing, speaking and listening skills expected of well-informed public citizens. Public sphere literacy means being able to function and communicate effectively within the society in which you live. The skills of academic literacy are adaptable to the public sphere. As with academic literacy, public sphere literacy is learned, and it can be learned at any stage in your life.

Each arena of the public sphere functions as a particular **discourse community**. Professions function as specific discourse communities; for example, accounting and law employ terminologies and ways of reasoning that are so specialized that non-specialists have to pay accountants and lawyers for their expertise. In addition to professions, other public sphere discourse communities include: sports fans, political parties, product brand consumers, members/volunteers of service organizations, religions, schools, etc. Each of these discourse communities has its own **discourse conventions**, a terminology and a set of "rules" for reasoning about ideas, formatting texts, and stylizing sentences. For example, a letter to the editor requires different writing conventions than does a press release, a memo, or a business proposal. And a speech at a service organization's anniversary dinner requires different speaking conventions than does a business presentation. And all of these conventions may vary from culture to culture.

To become literate in the public sphere, you need to become familiar with **public discourse(s)**, the kinds of writing and speaking that takes place in your society. And there are **multiple levels of public discourse**.

1. **Expert to expert**—the ways that experts (e.g., civil engineers) communicate with each other (e.g., other civil engineers)
2. **Expert to nonexpert**—the ways that experts (e.g., accountants) communicate with nonexperts (e.g., their clients)
3. **Nonexpert to expert**—the ways that nonexperts (e.g., clients) communicate with experts (e.g., lawyers)
4. **Citizen to citizen**—the ways that average citizens (e.g., political volunteers) communicate with other average citizens (e.g., potential voters)

Because you may not have yet reached the level of expert in your chosen field of study, this textbook focuses on the third and fourth levels of public sphere literacy: nonexpert to expert and citizen to citizen. That is, you will be asked to think as a citizen and communicate to experts and to other citizens. Specifically, this textbook will help you develop critical literacy in the public sphere, i.e., learning how to *recognize, analyze, employ* and, when necessary, *interrupt* the discourse conventions of various public writing situations.

But by now you may be wondering: how exactly do I develop this critical literacy in academic and public spheres? One means is via rhetorical theory.

V. How Can Rhetorical Theory Help You Achieve Critical Literacy?

For Aristotle, a famous Greek philosopher and rhetorician, **classical rhetoric** meant the art of persuasion, specifically the art of discovering all the available means of persuasion for any argument that you might need to make. Aristotle's students studied rhetoric with him to learn how to analyze speeches and also how to write and present effective speeches. Today rhetoric has a much broader meaning. Quite simply, **contemporary rhetoric** refers to the ways that people use language and the ways that language uses people.

What does this contemporary definition mean? The first part is fairly simple. It posits **rhetoric** as *the ways that people use language* to explain, analyze, critique, argue, interpret, persuade, and problem solve. Notice that this definition includes all the rhetorical aims covered in this book, thus extending the focus of rhetoric beyond persuasion. Keep in mind, though, that all language use has a persuasive function: when you explain something, you are trying to persuade your audience to accept your explanation, and when you problem solve, you are trying to persuade your audience to accept your solution to the problem.

The second part of the contemporary definition of *rhetoric* is a little more complex. It posits rhetoric as *the ways that language uses people*—that is, the ways that language socializes people. What exactly does *socialization* mean? Well, it

refers to the ways that people become part of a culture. Everyone in the world is born into a culture, and each culture has an already-existing language, i.e., words that function as categories for describing the world. In the U.S., for example, a person is born into a culture where the English word *modern* categorizes our world in terms of historical moment; the word *terrorism* categorizes our world in terms of global political fears; and the word *sweet* categorizes flavor and hipness. Thus, learning a language is simultaneously learning ways of *naming* our world, *organizing* it, *assigning value* to it, and *taking action* within our world based on our values.

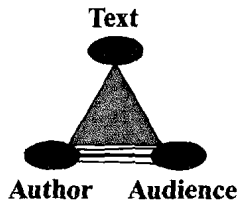
But sometimes words confuse our attempts to name, organize and assign value to our world. For example, in the U.S. a person is born into a culture where the word *race* classifies people into different categories. But biologists assure us, via evidence from the Human Genome Project, that *race* is a false, totally made-up category. There is no scientific evidence that supports the idea of biological racial differences among humans (Yes, the scientists tell us, DNA variation may occur among groups of people living separated from one another in different regions of the world, but DNA variation is not the equivalent of distinct racial differences among people). So as a society, the U.S. is left with the word *race*, which has no scientific grounding in biology but which does have a powerful cultural effect on all our daily lives in that it functions as a category by which, rightly or wrongly, we name people, organize them, assign value to them, and take action in relation to them. Thus, the word *race* is just one example of the power of language to shape how people see reality; it is also one reason why you should study rhetoric to develop your critical literacy. For critical literacy helps you not just to *recognize* and *analyze* discourse conventions, such as word usage, but also to decide whether to *employ* or *interrupt* those conventions.

But how exactly can you learn to recognize, analyze, employ and/or interrupt discourse conventions? Well, rhetorical tactics provide you one means for developing this critical literacy.

VI. What Are Rhetorical Tactics?

Critical literacy entails developing skills of rhetorical analysis. **Rhetorical analysis** invites you to examine a text not just for *what is said* but also for *why it is said*, *how it is said*, and *how it affects its audiences*. The means of rhetorical analysis are rhetorical tactics. **Rhetorical tactics** are critical thinking moves, based on concepts from rhetorical theories. Two points to keep in mind when using rhetorical tactics to develop critical literacy: (1) the following tactics should not be followed in a lockstep fashion, and (2) the questions listed below are not the only questions that might be generated for each tactic. Using rhetorical theory to determine how people should use language or how language uses people is not a paint-by-number proposition. Rather, the following tactics of *rhetorical triangle*, *rhetorical situation*, *rhetorical canons*, *stasis theory*, *cultural logics*, and *standpoint theory* may function as springboards for your own thinking and questioning, whether you are reading, writing, speaking or listening in academic or public spheres.

1. Rhetorical Triangle. According to Aristotle, one tactic for understanding how to use language and/or understanding how language uses people is the **rhetorical triangle**. Too often people believe that the meaning of a text (e.g., a film or a book) lies solely within the text and that the audience's job is simply to "find" the already-existing meaning. But this idea is too simplistic. Aristotle's triangle challenges us to consider how meaning emerges from the *interactions* of **writer, text, and audience**:



For example, when you watch a movie (e.g., Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*), the meaning that you take with you as you walk out of the theater is a combination of the author's ideas, the film itself, and your own values and beliefs. If you are a fan of George W. Bush, you probably will take a different meaning away than if you are not a George W. Bush fan. There are, of course, limits to the kinds of meaning that can be generated. Audience members cannot argue that *Fahrenheit 9/11* is about training nursery school teachers; there is simply no textual evidence for that. But audience members can (and do) argue, based on their own pre-existing political values and beliefs, whether or not the film is an accurate portrayal of Bush's presidency.

When you read and write about the selections in this textbook, you may make use of Aristotle's rhetorical triangle as a rhetorical tactic. Focusing on each component of the triangle will help you generate questions about the interaction of the components, which will, in turn, help you think critically about your reading and writing.

When you are the audience (i.e., the reader and/or listener), the rhetorical triangle encourages you to ask questions, such as the following:

Questions to ask yourself about the AUTHOR of a text

- (1) What levels of author exist? (e.g., implied author, actual author, editors, publishing house)
- (2) What information do I have about the *author* of the text, and how does that information (or lack of it) influence *my reading* of the *text*?
- (3) How knowledgeable is the author about the topic, based on evidence from the *text*?

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- (4) How well does the author address possible *audiences* for his/her *text*? How well does he/she address *me*?

Questions to ask yourself about the TEXT

- (1) How well is the *text* organized to express the *author's* ideas and to communicate the author's ideas to different *audiences*?
- (2) How well does the *text* use evidence to support the *author's* claims so that *audiences* will understand the claims?
- (3) How well does the style of the *text* reflect the *author's* voice and communicate his/her ideas effectively to different *audiences*, including me?

Questions to ask yourself about you as the AUDIENCE

- (1) What levels of audience are implied in the text? (e.g., implied audience in text, actual reader)
- (2) How is *my reading* influenced by the *writer's stance* in the *text* (Is he an expert, a crackpot? Is she a liberal, a conservative?)?
- (3) How is *my reading* of a text influenced by the *writer's purpose* as expressed in the *text* (Does she want to inform, to persuade, to tell the truth)?
- (4) How is *my reading* of a text influenced by the *writer's choice* of *textual features* (is the content useful or useless? is the structure logical? is the style accessible?)?
- (5) And as an *audience/reader*, how are your responses to a *text* shaped by your own values and beliefs?

But what happens if you are not the audience for a text but rather its author? How may the rhetorical triangle help you then?

When you are the author (i.e., the **speaker** and/or **writer**), the previous questions may simply be reframed to help you analyze what you are speaking or writing about:

Questions to ask yourself as the AUTHOR of a text

- (1) What information does my *audience* have about *me*, and how might it influence their reading of *my text*?
- (2) How knowledgeable about the topic am *I*, and what information do I need to investigate further so that *my text* will be credible to my *readers*?
- (3) How well do *I* address possible *audiences* of my *text*?

Questions to ask yourself about the TEXT you have written

- (1) How well is my *text* organized to express *my ideas* and to communicate them to an *audience*?
- (2) How well does my *text* provide evidence to support *my claims* so that an *audience* will understand my claims?
- (3) How well does my style in the *text* reflect *my voice* and communicate effectively to an *audience*?

Questions to ask yourself about the AUDIENCES for your text

- (1) How may *readers* be influenced by *my stance* in the *text* (Do I come across as an expert, a crackpot, a liberal, a conservative)?
- (2) How may *readers* be influenced by *my purpose* as expressed in *my text* (Am I trying to inform, to persuade, to tell the truth)?
- (3) How may *readers* be influenced by *my choice* of *textual features* (is the content useful or useless? is the structure logical? is the style accessible?)?
- (4) How may *readers' responses* to my *text* be shaped by their values/beliefs?

Thinking about such questions helps you generate information about your topic; thinking about such questions also helps you anticipate an audience's questions and concerns about your topic. By contemplating such considerations, you may speak and/or write more clearly and more effectively.

But remember: Aristotle's rhetorical triangle does not exist in a vacuum. A writer, a text, and an audience are always located within historical and cultural contexts, what rhetoricians call rhetorical situation.

2. Rhetorical Situation. Another tactic for understanding how to use language and/or understanding how language uses people is context, or **rhetorical situation**. A famous 20th-century rhetorician named Lloyd Bitzer claimed that whenever you speak, write, read, or listen, you should question three components of a rhetorical situation:

- (1) ***Exigencies***—What triggers an author to compose a text and/or what triggers an audience to pay attention to the text?
- (2) ***Constraints***—What hinders an author when composing a text and/or what hinders audiences when reading or listening to it?
- (3) ***Audience***—How does the audience influence the author's writing process, speaking process, and/or choices in the finished text?

Although Bitzer's components are a useful tool for analysis, don't be fooled by their seeming simplicity. You should always ask: *Which rhetorical situation am I analyzing?* Let me explain.

When you read, write, speak, or listen to a text, you should consider several co-existing contexts. They include:

- (1) **Historical Contexts**—At what point in history was the text composed? When is the text being read/heard? What is significant about these contexts—and/or about gaps between these contexts?
- (2) **Cultural Contexts**—In what cultural situation was the text composed? Where is the text being read/heard? What is significant about these contexts—and/or about the gaps between these contexts?
- (3) **Authorial Contexts**—What are the perspectives and situations of authors and/or of the institutions with which authors are affiliated? What is significant about these perspectives?
- (4) **Audience Contexts**—What are the perspectives and situations of different audiences of a text and/or what are the perspectives of the institutions with which audiences are affiliated? What is significant about these perspectives?

Any or all of these contexts can affect the meaning generated from a text. For example, assume you are a political conservative (audience context) and you are reading a text that you know was published by a liberal thinktank (authorial context); before you ever begin reading the text, you may be suspicious of it. Or assume a loved one is ill and you are reading about his/her disease (audience context). If you read a medical source written in 1932 (historical context) in Russia (cultural context), you will probably be suspicious of its relevance, given the increased technologies and improved medical treatments have that been developed since then (historical and cultural contexts). Thinking about rhetorical situation is important. It not only contextualizes ideas and texts; it deepens your critical thinking abilities, especially (ironically) when you realize that you can probably never totally reconstruct all the factors of a rhetorical situation.

When the classical rhetoricians were trying to define critical thinking abilities, they classified them into five categories, otherwise known as rhetorical canons.

3. Rhetorical Canons. Another tactic for understanding how people use language and how language uses people is the rhetorical canons. In classical Rome, a famous rhetorician named Cicero classified the study of rhetoric into five canons: (1) invention; (2) arrangement; (3) style; (4) memory; and (5) delivery. The five canons were intended to systematize critical thinking processes so as to make people's use of language more efficient. As such, the five canons serve

as sites for helping you ask questions about a text whether you are functioning as reader, writer, speaker, or listener.

The first rhetorical canon, **invention**, is the process of *generating information* about a topic. Questions about invention vary, depending on your role in relation to the text.

Reader/Listener

- (1) How does the text define its topic?
- (2) What perspective does the text express?
- (3) What is the purpose of the text—to inform, persuade, entertain?
- (4) What audience concerns are apparent in the text?
- (5) What kinds of evidence are employed in the text?
 - (a) personal reasoning
 - (b) personal observations and/or experiences
 - (c) textual sources (books, journals, newspapers, web sites, etc.)
 - (d) conversations/interviews/field research
 - (e) empirical studies (statistics)

Speaker/Writer

- (1) How do I define my topic?
- (2) What is my perspective?
- (3) What is the purpose of my text?
- (4) How will audience concerns affect my finished text?
- (5) What evidence will I use?

Academic and public sphere thinking processes all demand invention, or ways of generating information. And these general questions will serve you well; however, you should not stop there. Particular academic disciplines and public sphere communities have particular means of invention—e.g., astrophysicists have one way of generating information about the moon; poet's have another.

The second rhetorical canon, **arrangement**, is the process of *organizing the information* generated during the invention stage into an effective order. Arrangement is more than simply what comes first, second, or third. It also establishes a logic, a way of thinking that leads readers through a text. Some questions to ask about arrangement, whether you are the reader/listener or the speaker/writer, include:

- (1) How is the text structured?
- (2) How can this structure be interpreted?
- (3) What logic is created or implied via the structure?
- (4) What cultural logics, or belief systems, are invoked in the text?
- (5) How are individual paragraphs structured?
- (6) How can each paragraph's structure be interpreted?