



Course: The Seven Liberal Arts

with Christopher Perrin
and Andrew Kern

Lesson 5: The Trivium Arts
with Andrew Kern

Outline:

“Now what is to us plain and obvious at first is rather confused masses, the elements and principles of which become known to us later by analysis. Thus we must advance from generalities to particulars...” (from Aristotle’s *Physics*, 350 BC)

Excerpt from Aristotle’s *Physics*, Book 1, Par. 3

- Humans begin learning from the general or vague, and then they move closer to the particular (principles, elements, and forms).
- For 25 or so years, Andrew Kern’s fascination with grammar was vague & undefinable, until he realized humans can know the world outside their minds and communicate to each other (soul to soul) through grammar.
- **Andrew Kern’s Convictions:** (10:15)
 - The world can be known by the Word because the Word created the world.
 - We can communicate to each other about the world through the Word.
 - The wellbeing of humankind depends on using correct language and grammar, which is crucial for a good education, a healthy soul, and a harmonious society.
 - Language is a means of knowing truth and bringing harmony to mind, soul, community, and cosmos.

The Trivium & Quadrivium (11:10)

- Harmony and its forms link the Trivium & Quadrivium.
- The Trivium is composed of Grammar, Logic, & Rhetoric because the three have a symbiotic relationship that gives humans access to new worlds.
 - For example, learning Latin, Greek, or Hebrew lets you access worlds you cannot know in any other way.

Grammar (15:53)

- **Formal Grammar**—a study of relationships between things



- **Meta-language**—Grammar is a meta-language because it is common to all languages and is woven into the minds of humans.
 - Human beings always think in subject-predicate.
 - All sentences are rooted in relationships.
- Grammar Principles:
 - Grammar concerns relating parts of sentences to each other—sentences that reflect the world we live in.
 - Grammar’s form helps us examine and analyze our thoughts to see if the relationships we explore are harmonious.
 - Thinking something in the right form (something that is true) sets us free.
- Grammar comes from the Greek word *grammatike*, which means “art of letters.” We study grammar to read, write, and interpret well!

From the General to Particular

- Music (*musike*) and gymnastics underlie the seven liberal arts.
 - A young child in ancient Greece learned music before grammar; music included memorizing texts like Homer or Sophocles.
 - The child began with the large, general picture—the epics of Homer—and later learned *grammaticos*, or grammar (the particulars).
- Grammar prepares students for formal logic.
 - Students must harmonize one thought (grammar) before harmonizing a sequence of thoughts (logic).

Formal Logic (28:56)

- **Formal Logic**—a sequence of sentences that agree with each other; those sentences lead to a conclusion.
- Elements of logic:
 - **Syllogism**— “All men are mortal. Socrates is a mortal. Therefore, Socrates is a man.” (A conclusion is drawn from premises.)
 - **Enthymeme**— “Socrates is a man, so he is mortal.” (An enthymeme is an argument in which one premise is not explicitly stated.)
- **Socratic Dialectic**: A free-flowing preparatory form of logic; a person seeks truth through questioning, often to resolve a certain discord.

Rhetoric (34:06)

- Aristotle defines rhetoric as finding all the available means of persuasion.

Final Thoughts

- Humans are born knowing that there is a Logos, which is why they think in the first place.
- Humans have a natural knowledge of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, but they must develop these skills to reach a higher level.
 - 1st Lesson: Natural, general knowledge that humans have.



- 2nd Lesson: Through coaching (imitating masters), humans develop a deeper knowledge.
- 3rd Lesson: Humans reach a stage where they grasp relationships and intuitively reach conclusions, such as composers or poets creating masterpieces.
- Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric help humans perceive truth, but without students having a coach, their abilities to bring harmony to their minds will be limited.
- Our ability to use language (as a manifestation of God within us) affects how we love our neighbor.