

Lesson 8



FOR A TYRANNICIDE

by Libanius

(1) We have regained freedom, O citizens, because this man has attacked the tyrant, with the gods struggling on his side. It is reasonable, then, for us to pay honor to them with sacrifices, but to reward this man with honors and begin our democracy anew with the law that grants a prize to whoever kills a tyrant. And so, the bodyguards and everyone who was a member of that man's faction has paid the penalty, all those who did not get away. And a fine thing, that; for it is necessary to hate not only tyrants, but also those who side with them. Well then, decorating those with honors who have struggled on behalf of the laws is consistent with being harsh toward those who have destroyed the laws. If it were clear, then, that no one would ever attack the constitution again, even so it would have been right for those who have delivered us from imminent evils to be deemed worthy of honors, but the danger resulting from our failure to show gratitude would have been nil. But now, since there are not a few people who will imitate the actions of the dead man, prove to them that there are also many who will emulate the actions of this man. This would result from the gift which typically summons the good to noble dangers.

(2) And so, now we are prospering under democratic governance, but while we were under a despot, the People was disbanded, the Council chambers were closed, the courts were abolished, none of the laws was in force, and in place of the laws there was the tyrant, who, having occupied the heights and putting spear-bearers and archers and many other guards around himself, what terrible crime did he not commit? He cut down marriages, he deprived brides of their weddings, he plundered money, and as for those who did not have any, from some he confiscated their property, others he banished, and still others he slaughtered, and he regarded those who praised his wrongdoing as his only friends. While these things were happening, everything was full of lamentation, grief,

and wailing by night and day alike. Some were groaning at what they had suffered, others were in the midst of suffering badly, and still others were in fear of future suffering. And we pitied those being born for what sort of experience of evils they would have.

(3) Everyone else, then, was defending themselves against that enemy of the gods, but only up to the point of cursing him—and even that, secretly— but this man here, a noble, courageous friend to the People, was the only one to repay the city for his rearing; for taking a dagger under his arm he rushed against the despot of the free. And as he drew near to the guards, nothing could stand in his way, but like a raging river sweeping everything away or a divinity driving men along, he cut down one man, was about to cut down another, pursued some, and threatened others. And wherever this man looked, everyone lay dead. And then, running through the corpses, he at last falls upon the one in power. But when the tyrant saw him, he jumped down off his throne and fell to his knees and begged, but did not receive pity. Rather, while cutting his throat, this fine fellow here said: “Receive these blows on behalf of the destitute, on behalf of the violated, on behalf of the refugees, on behalf of the dead.” From such deeds as these he has come, and while he went up holding a clean sword, he brought it back from the Acropolis covered in blood. And now we are in assembly and the rostrum welcomes the orators because of this man’s right hand.

(4) Grant then, grant the gift which the laws order, the laws which this man has restored. For let the man who has served justly as an ambassador be honored, as well as the one who has made an expedient proposal, the one who has established a profitable law, and the one who has voluntarily given money and warships, for they all ought to receive equal compensation, but inasmuch as the tyrannicide reveals his goodwill in the face of danger, let him be decorated with gifts so much greater and much more so than those who achieve this in war. Why? Because those who do the other have the help of their fellow soldiers, and if someone surpasses the rest by a little, he gains the glory of their joint efforts; and now one of those standing by him shoves away a weapon aimed at him, and for this man there is a helmet, a shield, a spear, greaves, and a sword. But the man who goes against a tyrant trusts only in his escaping

detection unforeseen; for he must be otherwise unequipped, if he intends to do something without proclaiming his intention in advance. But if turning to and fro by himself in the midst of so many hoplites is greater than attacking along with a phalanx, the slaughter of a tyrant is more respectable than bravery in battle.

(5) And so, what has just now been accomplished is great, but his actions before this are also deserving of honors; for what has just now happened teaches me what sort of man he was in the past; for by having been self-controlled and just and moderate and patriotic, and by exercising his body with labors and his mind with lessons, he seems to me to have come from there to the point of being confident even in the face of such things as these.

(6) What sensible person, then, would not feel shame before this man's decision? He thought that he had either to put a stop to the despair or no longer see the sun. For he did not go up as one of the generals, nor did he hear this from the prophets, but he went thinking that it was noble for him either to bring down the tyrant or to die. And to the man who voluntarily gave his life for the city, let the city pay honor; for he will not ask for anything burdensome; for how, tell me, is a crown of olive or a public proclamation onerous? Or a statue, or free maintenance in the Prytaneum? Or rather, even if he wishes to receive land and money, he will get it from what he restored, and having protected everyone's property, he will gain only a little profit from the many things he saved.

(7) Let no one therefore treat our benefactor unfairly for having put an end to the terror; rather, let him think on that thunderbolt, the bodyguards, the plunderings, the lamentations, the man who ran to the heights, who battled the guards, who attacked the tyrant, who did not fear the swords flashing on all sides, and who has defeated such a great power. Having considered these points, then, behave justly toward the man who restored our freedom with his sword.

—TRANSLATED BY CRAIG A. GIBSON



Lesson 8.1

Prose & Poetry

ANCIENT LAUDATORY COMMON-PLACE

Read the Ancient Common-place "For A Tyrannicide"¹ at the beginning of this lesson.



Label each paragraph as follows:

- ♦ Paragraph 1: Prologue
- ♦ Paragraphs 2-5: choose from these headers: Contrary (From the Opposite), Exposition, Comparison, Intention, Digression (Past Life or Antecedent Acts)
- ♦ Paragraph 6: Praise this person. Note which of the following final heads are used in Paragraph 7: Justice/Honor, Legality, Necessity, Practicability, Propriety, Profitability



Mark the equivalent of the modern thesis statement in the first paragraph (note that it is not at the end this time). Discuss these questions with your teacher and classmates to aid your understanding of the ancient essay.

- ♦ What is a *tyrannicide*? Conduct a vocabulary study on the word, then write a clear definition in consideration of the ancient context. List some examples of tyrannicides throughout history.
- ♦ Who was Libanius? When and where did he live?
- ♦ Paragraph 1: To whom is this speech addressed? How is the tyrannicide defined in this paragraph? What is the thesis statement? Who has "struggled on behalf of the laws," and what does this mean? Who has "destroyed the laws," and what does this mean?
- ♦ Paragraph 2: This paragraph first names the current favorable situation, then describes the previous opposite situation. What are each of these situations? What were the characteristics of the previous situation?
- ♦ Paragraph 3: What actions of the tyrannicide are described here?
- ♦ Paragraph 4: To which other kind of benefactor is the tyrannicide compared? How is the tyrannicide more beneficial? Why?
- ♦ Paragraph 5: What deeds and habits must have characterized the tyrannicide's past life in order to result in his present actions?
- ♦ Paragraph 6: Why would a "sensible person . . . feel shame before this man's decision?"



¹ *Tyrannicide* is a noun that can refer to either the act, or the person who commits the act; cf. *patricide*. In the Ancient Common-place, *tyrannicide* refers to the person who kills a tyrant.

How and why should the city honor this man?

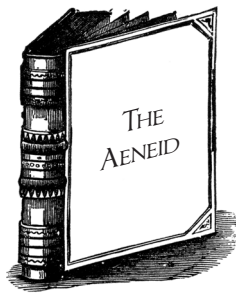
- ♦ Paragraph 7: If one is inclined to treat the tyrannicide unfairly, what should he think on? Why will this result in a decision to "behave justly?"

🌿 In your Writer's Journal (or on the computer if your teacher prefers/permits) paraphrase the Ancient Common-place "For a Tyrannicide." Work paragraph by paragraph, restating each in your own words. Your final paraphrase should be very close in length to the original. Follow these steps for each paragraph:

- A. Read each paragraph carefully two or three times. Look up any words or references that you do not understand.
- B. Underline key words in the paragraph. Choose synonyms (words, phrases, or clauses) for each one. Rewrite each sentence using copia of words. (See Appendix.)
- C. Revise and smooth your paraphrase using copia of construction techniques. (See Appendix.) Keep the meaning intact, but completely restate each sentence and paragraph in your own words.
- D. Give your paraphrase a new title, and include this subtitle: Paraphrase of "Against a Tyrant," by Aphthonius.



LITERATURE: THE AENEID



- 🌿 Read *Aeneid*:
 - ♦ Book VIII
- 🌿 As you read, continue to mark the text and make notes:
 - ♦ Literary concepts and terms you observe in the narrative. Do any of your earlier thoughts need revision?
 - ♦ Instances of **epic simile**.
 - ♦ Mark passages that depict **fatum, patria, pietas, and/or furor**.



🌿 Discuss this week's reading with your teacher, along with all your notes and observations. Narrate the main action of the book, and discuss any parts you did not understand. How was this reading delightful? What wisdom does this reading furnish?

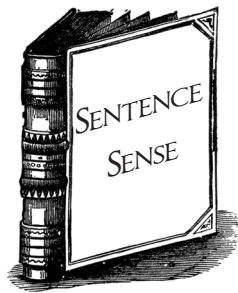
Lesson 8.2

Language Logic

ADJECTIVES – DEFINITIVE SUB-CLASSES

The following assignment assumes that you are thoroughly comfortable with all of the other adjective terms and definitions. If you need any additional review on adjectives, study the additional sections in *Sentence Sense*, Etymology – The Adjective.

☉ Study these sections in *Sentence Sense* as instructed.



I. Etymology – The Adjective

- ♦ 4.3A through 4.3H Definitive Adjectives – Classes and Subclasses
- ♦ 4.5 Adjective Cautions *Read and heed! Note that the examples show mostly incorrect usages. For practice, orally correct each of the examples using the given caution, and check your answers in Teaching Helps.*

II. Syntax – Rules of Syntax

- ♦ 10.0 Study Rule XII.

IV. A Method of Parsing

- ♦ 27.2 Parsing an Adjective *Adjective sub-classes should be included in your parsing from now on.*

V. Exercises

- ♦ Harvey's 55, Sentences 1, 2, 5, 7, and 8: *Identify the adjectives only, and give the class and sub-class for each*

SENTENCE DIAGRAMMING AND PARSING

☉ In your Writer's Journal, copy this sentence. Mark the prepositional phrases, subjects, and verbs. Bracket the clauses. Classify the sentence as simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex. Then diagram it, referring to *Sentence Sense* as needed. Can you identify any figures of speech?

Some were groaning at what they had suffered, others were in the midst of suffering badly, and still others were in fear of future suffering.



☉ Note any figures of speech (both tropes and schemes, P&P 70-93) or description (P&P 94ff).

- ☉ With your teacher, orally parse these words from the sentences that you already diagrammed. Use the charts in *Sentence Sense* to guide you.

Some, had suffered, others, in the midst, badly, still, future, suffering

Lesson 8.3

Eloquent Expression

FIGURE OF SPEECH – EPISTROPHE

Epistrophe is another scheme of repetition. The repetition in epistrophe occurs at the end of successive phrases, clauses, or sentences for a more subtle effect than anaphora, yet it is still a figure that creates a memorable impression. This figure also is often used in conjunction with parallelism and antithesis. Discuss these examples of epistrophe with your teacher.

Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man. — Francis Bacon, “Of Studies”

. . . and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth. — Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address

For the LORD’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance. In a desert land he found him; And in the waste howling wilderness, about, he led him; He instructed him; As the apple of His eye He kept him . . . So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him — Deuteronomy 32:9-10 and 12²

Poetry is certainly something more than good sense, but it must be good sense at all events; just as a palace is more than a house, but it must be a house, at least. — Samuel Taylor Coleridge

- ☉ Discuss the examples of epistrophe with your teacher. Can you identify any additional figures? Scan selections from earlier lessons in this book to see if they contain this figure.

- ☉ Add the following entry in the Figures division of your Prose & Poetry Handbook.

♦ Epistrophe, P&P 73



2 Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*. Note that Bullinger translates literally here to show the Hebrew use of the figure.

Lesson 8.4

Classical Composition

COMMON-PLACE EXERCISES: PIOUS MAN AND IMPIOUS MAN

In the opening lines of his epic poem, Virgil introduces us to his hero Aeneas as *insignem pietate virum*, a man marked by piety (Fitzgerald renders this "a man apart, devoted to his mission"). One of Virgil's favorite epithets for Aeneas is *pius*, which is often translated *piety* (see footnote to Lesson 1.1 about alternate translations which you will want to consider). Though *piety* is a word that has fallen out of fashion, and sometimes even carries negative connotations, it does express a particular virtuous character, one who is "faithful to, or according with, the duties and obligations owed to family, friends, or others; characterized by loyal affection, esp[ecially] to parents; dutiful, loyal."³ In this sense, it is a word worth redeeming. In this set of exercises, you will consider why a pious man ought to be praised, and why an impious man ought to be condemned. In this lesson, you will plan your content for both exercise which you will write and revise in upcoming lessons.

COMMON-PLACE FOR A PIOUS MAN: PLAN

For the ancient epics, include parenthetical citations, e.g. (*Aeneid*, I.ii or *Odyssey*, X.xi); the upper case Roman numeral refers to the book number, and the lower case refers to the line number. Make sure you keep track of these in your planning.

First, you must define your term. Conduct a vocabulary study on the word *pious*, in the sense noted above, then write a clear definition in your own words. Consider the senses in which Aeneas exhibits piety. List some examples of pious men through history. Although you will not name these in your essay, these examples will help you shape your arguments.



Use the following prompts to develop content for your common-place topics.

1. Prologue: Who is your audience (fellow students, church, community, nation, society as a whole)? What value does piety have to this audience? How will you address this audience in terms of its duty to value a pious man?
2. Contrary (From the Opposite): What would it be like if the group you are addressing lacks pious men?

3 "pious, adj.". *OED Online*. March 2022. Oxford University Press. <https://www-oed-com> (accessed May 25, 2022).

3. Exposition: List the benefits of a pious man; emphasize the magnitude of his acts. *How do pious men embody virtue; how do they motivate us toward virtue and away from vice?*
4. Maxim: Look for a maxim (or famous quote, or a Scripture) about the value of piety (duty and loyalty). The speaker should be someone whom your audience will recognize and revere. Why is this testimony true?
5. Comparison: What other virtue is almost as good? List some areas of comparison and reasons why the pious man is superior.
6. Intention (Way of Thinking) and Digression (Past Life, Antecedent Acts)—combine, or just concentrate on one of these for this essay: Make a list of habits, thoughts, and deeds that must have characterized the pious man's past life in order to result in his present abilities and actions.
7. Praise and Exhortation: Make a list of those who ought to praise the pious man. Why should each one praise him? Explore specific reasons of
 - ♦ Justice/Honor: Why is it just and honorable to praise the pious man?
 - ♦ Legality: Should any laws be considered in promoting this?
 - ♦ Necessity: Why is piety necessary to the group you are addressing? Why is it necessary to revive this meaning of piety?
 - ♦ Practicability: How can the promotion of piety be effected? Is this practical?
 - ♦ Propriety: Why is it fitting to praise the pious man?
 - ♦ Profitability: To whom and in what ways is the lauding of the the pious man and his acts advantageous or beneficial?

COMMON-PLACE AGAINST AN IMPIOUS MAN: PLAN

For the ancient epics, include parenthetical citations, e.g. (*Aeneid*, I.ii or *Odyssey*, X.xi); the upper case Roman numeral refers to the book number, and the lower case refers to the line number. Make sure you keep track of these in your planning.



First, you must define your term. Conduct a vocabulary study on the word *pious*, in the sense noted above, then write a clear definition in your own words. Consider the senses in which Aeneas exhibits piety. What would be the opposite? List some examples of pious men through history. Although you will not name these in your essay, these examples will help you shape your arguments.



 Use the following prompts to develop content for your common-place topics.

1. Prologue: In “Against a Tyrant,” the larger context of the evil action of the tyrant was the laws and the constitution. What will be the larger context for the evil action of your wrongdoer? In the original, the audience was the jury. What will be your audience? How will you address them in terms of their duty?
2. Contrary (From the Opposite): First consider what motivates the wrongdoer. What is the underlying vice or evil? Then, determine the virtue that is the opposite of that vice or evil. What kind of person is motivated by that virtue? How does that benefit your audience or the larger entity it represents (society, church, family, etc.)
3. Exposition: Describe the evil actions of the impious person, without naming him or her specifically.
4. Comparison: What other type of wrongdoer is almost as bad? List some areas of comparison and reasons why your wrongdoer is worse.
5. Intention: Why must we consider this kind of wrongdoing intentional? What occupations should the wrongdoer have pursued instead of the ones he chose? What kind of wrong thinking and evil intentions led to this act?
6. Digression (Past Life, Antecedent Acts): What kind of past moral choices would lead to this behavior? List a chain of possible actions as a result of these poor moral choices.
7. Show No Pity: Who might be tempted to show pity to this type of wrongdoer? Why should your reader resist? Explore specific reasons of:
 - ♦ Justice/Honor: Why would it be unjust or dishonorable to allow the wrongdoer to go unpunished?
 - ♦ Legality: What laws would be compromised by allowing the wrongdoer to go unpunished?
 - ♦ Necessity: Why is it necessary not to allow the wrongdoer to go unpunished?
 - ♦ Practicability: How can the punishment of this wrongdoer be effected? Is this practical?
 - ♦ Propriety: Why is it not fitting to allow the wrongdoer to go unpunished?
 - ♦ Profitability: To whom and in what ways is the punishment of this wrongdoer advantageous or beneficial?

Lesson 8.5

Reflection & Review

CLASSROOM CATECHISM

At the start of each class, recite the Classroom Catechism.



COMMONPLACE BOOK



Enter in your Commonplace Book from your current literature reading (see Lesson 8.1 Prose & Poetry):

- ◆ a favorite passage or two
- ◆ an example or two of the new figure(s) you learned in Lesson 8.3
- ◆ an example or two of any other figures you have learned thus far in *Poetics & Progyrn*. See the Appendix for a list of figures.

