**The Six-Part Oration**

**An Exercise in Classical Argument**

The six-part oration was first developed by first-century rhetorician Marcus Tullius Cicero (aka Cicero). These six moves may be used to structure an argumentative essay.

**The Six Moves in a Flow Chart:** (with some fancy Latin vocabulary thrown in there as well)

Source: Jolliffe, David A., and Hephzibah Roskelly. *Writing America: Language and Composition in Context*. Boston: Pearson Education, 2014. 116-17. Print.

**The Six Parts in Greater Detail**

* Exordium\*\*
  + Typically employs the appeal of ethos
    - Your primary objectives are to make clear why you are an authority on this topic, why the topic itself is important, and establish a common ground with your audience.
    - Questions to ask yourself: How will I make my audience trust me? How will I make my audience believe me?
* Narration\*\*
  + Typically employs the appeal of pathos or logos depending on the topic
    - You’re going to either tell a story or paint a picture of what’s said on your topic.
    - Questions to ask yourself: What do people normally say about this issue? What compels me to speak on this topic?
* Partition\*\*
  + You must commit to a thesis. You will also summarize the major points that your argument will address throughout the rest of your essay.
* Confirmation
  + Typically employs the appeal of logos, although pathos is a possibility
    - You must provide evidence for your thesis. You’ve been doing this all along. Here’s where you include quotations from research/experts, facts, statistics, details, examples, etc.
    - Questions to ask yourself: What are the most compelling pieces of evidence I can use to prove my point? How do I interpret the evidence for my readers so as to ensure there is no room for doubt or misinterpretation?
* Refutation
  + Typically employs both logos and ethos
    - You must consider **reasonable** objections to your claims—don’t make your opposition sound like idiots!
    - Questions to ask yourself: What are they going to say in opposition to what I’ve claimed? How am I going to utilize the evidence I’ve gathered to prove them wrong? Do I need to make any concessions to my own argument?
* Peroration
  + Your conclusion should serve two major functions:
    - 1. It should *sound* like a conclusion. In other words, it should be very clear to your audience what they should do with the information you’ve given them.
    - 2. It should answer the “so what” question: You audience should know precisely why they should care about this issue when you’re done.

\*\*Be aware that not all six parts merit their own paragraphs. For example, parts 1-3 (Exordium, Narration, and Partition) typically appear in the same introductory paragraph whereas part 4 (Confirmation) often consumes multiple paragraphs.