

# St. augustine' art of rhetoric



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St. Augustine: Rhetoric brilliance  
Specific Purpose and Goal and Thesis: My personal goal/specific purpose for this speech is to create awareness about the art of Speech (Rhetoric). I want to improve my interpersonal as well as public speaking abilities and want to hone my rhetoric talent; I have sought guidance from a great Roman rhetorician's works, St. Augustine. I have chosen St. Augustine for the fact that considering his diverse religious maternity, he still had a very clear vision of what he had to do in his life and the way he put his talents of rhetoric to full use has been a phenomenal inspiration for not only me but generations to come.

" A thing is not necessarily true because badly uttered, nor false because spoken magnificently." (Saint Augustine)

Hello!

My Name is Ben Ely and I have known about this rhetorician for the last few years. I have gone through his works and heard one of his quotes that I really enjoyed because it explained very eloquently one of my main pursuits in life. The quote goes " The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page." (Saint Augustine).

Hearing that quote got me interested in learning more about this Saint and his life and rhetoric works. St. Augustine was an extremely intelligent man. He was born at Tagaste in proconsul Numidia in 354, to pagan father and a Christian mother. After his first studies in his native city, he went to Carthage, with the financial aid of Romanians, to complete his studies in rhetoric. At the same time, however, he fell a slave to his youthful passions and even became connected with the Manichaeian religious sect. After completing his studies, he first established his school at Tagaste, and later at

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Carthage, where he taught rhetoric for eight years, at the same time studying philosophy and the natural sciences.

Augustine was greatly influenced during his education and in his adolescence by Cicero, a Roman rhetorician, a great master of Latin rhetoric and composition and especially one of his works in particular, Hortensius. Augustine stated that rhetoric is neither good nor bad in itself, but can be used to effectively defend both what is true and what is false. He introduces rhetoric as "the verbal expression of thought". He goes on to point out that if one wishes to defend truth, it is crucial to be eloquent in order to refute what is false through the power of oratory.

The orator must formulate his speech in such a way as to instruct the audience, hold their attention, and to win. By this, Augustine meant that the orator must not only instruct the audience in what is true, he must also convince them of the truth so that they will act on it. Augustine carefully listed both the goals and the pitfalls of instructional rhetoric.

Clarity and understanding are the primary goals in rhetoric. A rhetorician should be able to adjust his manner of speaking to the abilities of his audience. For example, if necessary the rhetorician should be able to abandon the niceties of proper grammar and speech in order to make the subject more accessible to the audience. When speaking or preaching to an assembly (such as in a church), it is not proper or customary for the audience to interrupt and ask questions. It is the role of the rhetorician to assist the listeners by anticipating their questions before they arise, and to answer them. To reach the most people, the subject should be presented in several ways.

Once it is clear that the point has been made and the audience has reached understanding, the rhetorician must move on. If he does not, he will lose the attention of his audience.

A rhetorician should always keep in mind the place, the audience, the tone, the words and his body language. Anyone, any random person amongst the mango people, brimming with self confidence and with a desire to impart knowledge so his thoughts can be voiced, should take a lead from the works of the great Roman rhetorician, St. Augustine.

I would like to conclude my argument by quoting an excerpt from one of St. Augustine's most acclaimed works, *De Doctrina Christiana*, the quote is " But sight shall displace faith, and hope shall be swallowed up in that perfect bliss to which we shall come: Love on the other hand shall wax greater when these other fail".

Thank you

The following list includes some of the most common sources included in St. Augustine: Rhetoric brilliance

" Adventures in Philosophy," [http://www. radicalacademy.](http://www.radicalacademy.com/philaugustine1.htm#doctrine)

[com/philaugustine1. htm#doctrine](http://www.radicalacademy.com/philaugustine1.htm#doctrine)

" Augustine: Texts and Translations," [http://www9. georgetown.](http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/jod/augustine/)

[edu/faculty/jod/augustine/](http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/jod/augustine/)

" Rhetoric," Augnet [http://www. augnet. org/default. asp?pageid= 412](http://www.augnet.org/default.asp?pageid=412)

" Saint Augustine," [http://www. augustinianknowledge. com/](http://www.augustinianknowledge.com/)

" Saint Augustine Quotes," Brainy Quotes [http://www. brainyquote.](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/s/saint_augustine.html)

[com/quotes/authors/s/saint\\_augustine. html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/s/saint_augustine.html)

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" St. Augustine's Rhetoric of Silence," Joseph Anthony Mazzeo Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1962), pp. 175-196