

*“...the sole true end of education is simply this:  
to teach men how to learn for themselves; and  
whatever instruction fails to do this is effort  
spent in vain.” - Dorothy Sayers*



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*Rockbridge Academy*

THE  
TRIVIUM

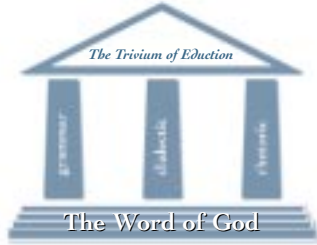
3 Stages to Knowledge



# The Trivium

## *A Classical Approach to Education*

Rockbridge students are encouraged and prepared to become “thinking Christians” through an educational system that treats all subjects as part of an integrated whole, with Scripture at its center. The Trivium is the methodological foundation of a Rockbridge education. Comprised of three contributory phases, Grammar, Dialectic, and Rhetoric; the trivium leads students through a course of learning that correlates systematically with their natural development. Excellence in the highest order: with Christ as our model, we strive for excellence in all that we do. At Rockbridge Academy, we feel passionately that a classical, Christian education best prepares students to become “thinking Christians,” who confront every challenge with confidence and scholarship.



*“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” - 2 Cor. 10:5*

## *The Grammar Stage: The Tools For Learning*

This period of learning, also termed the “Poll Parrot” stage, corresponds with the elementary years of a child’s development when observation and memory are most keen. During this time, Students are best equipped to memorize and order the many facts and particulars of various subject areas. All subjects can be broken down into a foundational set of basic facts and rules. These rules are referred to as the grammar of each subject.

Students at Rockbridge learn and use the tools that will serve them in the later stages of the trivium, when reason, analysis and expression are realized. During the Grammar stage students are trained in Latin which is a vital foundation for understanding a wealth of material at its fundamental basis. In addition, Rockbridge students memorize and learn the essential “grammar” of English, History, Science, Modern Languages, Mathematics, Geography and Theology.

Knowledge is absorbed collectively and forms the beginnings of a more complete and full Christian understanding of our world.

## *The Dialectic Stage: Reason. Engage. Understand.*

Formal logic, correct argumentation, analysis of information, and deductive reasoning comprise the “master faculties” of the Dialectic stage. Students will use the tools they have acquired to develop understanding and advance theories and arguments based on logical processes.

Learning in all aspects will progress, allowing students to analyze the how’s and why’s of our physical and spiritual world through discussion, deduction and constructive criticism. Students will ask questions and develop their own answers systematically; assertively challenging fallacy, faulty reasoning and unsound arguments.

This process is integral to the growth and exploration of a child’s imagination: the basis for learning in the final stage of the trivium.

## *The Rhetoric Stage: Experience In Bloom*

The Rhetoric stage, also known as the “Poetic Phase,” affords students with a level of freedom to explore self-expression, creativity, and scholarly appreciation. This period of education meets with students when they are most naturally passionate, providing them with a structured base to explore their scholarly passions with wisdom at its root.

Students learn to express themselves with excellence, applying digested and investigated materials in open presentation. Students reinforce the communication skills that blossom most prevalently in these later, high-school years. The result is informed, engaging, and articulate students who are representative of the excellent, Christian education provided them at Rockbridge.

*a classical approach to education*