What Are the Five Canons of Rhetoric?

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Answer:

As defined by the Roman philosopher Cicero and the unknown author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, the canons of rhetoric are these five overlapping divisions of the rhetorical process:

1. **Invention** (Latin, *inventio*; Greek, *heuresis*)
   Invention is the art of finding the appropriate arguments in any rhetorical situation. In his early treatise *De Inventione* (c. 84 B.C.), Cicero defined invention as the "discovery of valid or seemingly valid arguments to render one's cause probable." In contemporary rhetoric, invention generally refers to a wide variety of research methods and discovery strategies.

2. **Arrangement** (Latin, *dispositio*; Greek, *taxis*)
   Arrangement refers to the parts of a speech or, more broadly, the structure of a text. In classical rhetoric, students were taught the distinctive parts of an oration. Though scholars did not always agree on the number of parts, Cicero and Quintilian identified these six: the exordium (or introduction), the narrative, the partition (or division), the confirmation, the refutation, and the peroration (or conclusion).

3. **Style** (Latin, *elocutio*; Greek, *lexis*)
   Style is the way in which something is spoken, written, or performed. Narrowly interpreted, style refers to word use, sentence structures, and figures of speech. More broadly, style is considered a manifestation of the person speaking or writing. Quintilian identified three levels of style, each suited to one of the three primary functions of rhetoric: the plain style for instructing an audience, the middle style for moving an audience, and the high style for pleasing an audience.

4. **Memory** (Latin, *memoria*; Greek, *mneme*)
   Memory includes the methods and devices (including figures of speech) used to aid and improve the memory. Roman rhetoricians made a distinction between natural memory (an innate ability) and artificial memory (particular techniques that enhanced natural abilities).

5. **Delivery** (Latin, *pronuntiato* and *actio*; Greek, *hypocrisy*)
   Delivery refers to the management of voice and gestures in oral discourse. Delivery, Cicero said in *De Oratore*, "has the sole and supreme power in oratory; without it, a speaker of the highest mental capacity can be held in no esteem; while one of moderate abilities, with this qualification, may surpass even those of the highest talent."