

An Outline of Sister Miriam Joseph's  
*The Trivium*

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## I. The Liberal Arts

### A. Trivium - pertains to mind

1. Logic
2. Grammar
3. Rhetoric

### B. Quadrivium - pertains to matter

1. Arithmetic
2. Geometry
3. Astronomy
4. Music

### C. Language Arts - the correct and effective use of language

1. *Phonetics* - how to combine sounds and form spoken words properly
2. *Spelling* - how to combine letters and form written words properly
3. *Grammar* - how to combine words to form sentences properly
4. *Rhetoric* - how to combine sentences into larger structures
5. *Logic* - how to combine concepts in a truthful, reasoned way

### D. Norms of Language Arts

1. *Correctness* - the norm of phonetics, spelling, and grammar
2. *Effectiveness* - the norm of rhetoric
3. *Truth* - the norm of logic

## II. The Nature and Function of Language

### A. Means of Communication

1. **Imitation** - an artificial likeness, for example:
  - a. Paintings
  - b. Photographs
  - c. Statues
2. **Symbol** - an arbitrary sign upon which meaning is imposed
  - a. *Common* - a symbol of a common language (e.g., English)
  - b. *Special* - a symbol of a specialized language (e.g., chemistry)

### B. Terms of Essence

1. *Essence* - that which makes a being what it is
2. *Species* - the set of all beings sharing an essence
3. *Genus* - a set of more than one species
4. *Aggregate* - a set of more than one individuals

### C. Imposition and Intention

1. Imposition
  - a. *Zero imposition* - discussing properties of a sign other than its meaning
  - b. *First imposition* - using a word only in relation to its meaning
  - c. *Second imposition* - refers both to the sign and the meaning (grammar)
2. Intention
  - a. *First intention* - refers to reality
  - b. *Second intention* - refers to the concept (logic)

### III. General Grammar

#### A. Categorematic vs. Syncategorematic Words

1. *Categorematic words* - significant by themselves
  - a. *Substantives* - nouns, pronouns
  - b. *Attributives* - verbs, adjectives (primary); adverbs (secondary)
2. *Syncategorematic words* - only significant in combination with other words
  - a. *Definitives* - articles, pronominals
  - b. *Connectives* - prepositions, conjunctions
  - c. *Copula* - connects subject and predicate

#### B. Substantives

1. Concrete vs. Abstract
  - a. *Concrete* - an existing object (e.g., “woman”)
  - b. *Abstract* - a conception (e.g., “femininity”)
2. Characteristics of Substantives
  - a. Number (singular or plural)
  - b. Gender (masculine, feminine, neuter)
  - c. Person
    - (1) *First person* - speaker
    - (2) *Second person* - receiver of speech
    - (3) *Third person* - person spoken of
  - d. Case
    - (1) *Nominative* - performs the action
    - (2) *Genitive* - possessor
    - (3) *Dative* - the term to which the action proceeds
    - (4) *Accusative* - receives the action

#### C. Attributives

1. Verbs
  - a. Express an attribute with a sense of time; make an assertion
  - b. *Transitive* verbs flow from subject to object; *intransitive* verbs stay with the agent
  - c. *Tense* - temporal relation between the act and its being spoken of
  - d. *Mood* - expresses relation between subject and predicate
    - (1) *Indicative* - expresses a matter of fact
    - (2) *Potential* - expresses a possibility
    - (3) *Interrogative* - requests information
    - (4) *Volitive* - expresses a wish or desire
2. Verbals
  - a. Do not assert or express mode
  - b. *Infinitives* - standard dictionary form of a verb (e.g., “to take”)
  - c. *Gerunds* - end in “-ing” and function as nouns
  - d. *Participles* - end in “-ed” or “-ing” and function as adjectives
3. Adjectives - Unlike verbs or verbals, adjectives express attributes with no notion of time
4. Adverbs - *Secondary* attributives in that they modify primary attributives (e.g., verbs and adjectives)

D. **Definitives** - single out an individual (“this”) or group (“those”)

E. **Connectives** - connect words and sentences

1. *Prepositions* - connect words and show their relation (e.g., “in” or “behind”)

2. *Conjunctions* - join independent clauses or sentences

a. May **conjoin**, that is, join sentences and meaning (e.g., “and”)

b. May **disjoin**, or join sentences but not meanings (e.g., “but” or “or”)

F. **The Pure Copula** - links a subject with a predicate (e.g., “The book **is** on the table.”)

#### IV. Terms and Their Grammatical Equivalents

A. Empirical vs. General Terms

1. *Empirical* terms designate a specific individual or group (e.g., “This cat is purring”)

2. *General* terms signify something universal or essentials (e.g., “Cats purr”)

B. Positive vs. negative terms (e.g., “awake” vs. “unawake,” “blue” vs. “non-blue”)

C. Concrete vs. abstract terms (e.g., “human” vs. “humanness”)

D. Absolute vs. relative terms

1. *Absolute* terms can be understood on their own (“man”, “woman”)

2. *Relative* terms come as pairs and are understood in relation to each other (“husband”, “wife”)

#### V. Propositions and Their Grammatical Expression

#### VI. Relations of Simple Propositions

#### VII. The Simple Syllogism

#### VIII. Relations of Hypothetical and Disjunctive Propositions

#### IX. Fallacies

#### X. A Brief Summary of Inductions

#### XI. Composition and Reading