ENCOMIUM, INVICTIVE, & COMPARISON STAGES

Discovering the Skills of Writing

TEACHER GUIDE
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Lesson 2: Encomium on an Individual: Chaucer

1. Prologue
You will have a Prologue referring to the subject in hand.

Heads of Purpose
The first sentence is complex and has two heads of purpose (e.g., honor and justice) that tell the purpose of encomiums in general.

It is right to praise those who write about human nature and display many desired qualities, which praise makes possible to see more clearly.

Thesis
The thesis tells who or what you specifically intend to praise in this Encomium.

So I will praise Geoffrey Chaucer because he not only applied his knowledge of civic affairs but also used his great poetic skill.

Heightener
The third sentence tells why you are praising this person, and it uses one of the seven heighteners:

1. Point out that a man is the only one who has done something.
2. Or the first who has done something.
3. Or almost the only one who has done something.
4. Or that he has done it better than anyone else.
5. Or make much of the particular season and occasion of an action, arguing that we could hardly have looked for it just then.
6. If a man has often achieved the same success, then mention this; he himself, and not luck, will then be given the credit.
7. So, too, if it is on his account that observances have been devised and instituted to encourage or honor such achievements as his own.

Geoffrey Chaucer was the first major English poet to shift the focus away from heroes and royalty.

Attribute + Heightener
The fourth sentence states a good discovered by or attributed to this person and heightens either the good or the person with one of the seven heighteners.

Writing poetry about the experiences of common people was unheard of before Chaucer.

2. Birth, Source, or Origin
Then you will place Birth, which you will divide into Nation, Homeland, Ancestors, and Parents.

Nation
Nation tells how the person was influenced by his country or nation. Find the narrative components and then write your answer.

Lesson 2 • Aphthonius’ Encomium on Thucydides

1. Prologue 80-90 words

HEADS OF PURPOSE

1. Read the directions; refer to Aphthonius’ example:

Ex It is right to honor those who have made useful discoveries for the good things they have provided, and to refer what they have brought to light back justly to those who disclosed it.

2. Ask: What are two reasons for Encomiums?

» It is right to praise those who write about human nature (justice) and display many desired qualities that we can benefit from (expediency).

3. Have students write an answer; it is a complex sentence.

» It must have one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

20 Lesson 2
His family was wealthy and he had a background of virtuous ancestors. Living in London and the countryside, he had the experiences of living both in a city and in the country, which gave him further knowledge of human nature.

Ancestors describes the person’s ancestors (e.g., kings). Find the narrative components and then write your answer.

- **Recognition**: Chaucer was descended from virtuous ancestors
- **Reversal**: virtues ancestors
- **Suffering**: the work and effort it took to attain virtue
- **Agent**: Chaucer, his ancestors
- **Time**: birth
- **Place**: England
- **Manner**: e.g., providentially
- **Cause**: Because he was born in this family

His family was wealthy and he had a background of virtuous ancestors.

England was his home and so provided the fuel he needed to write marvelous poems and books. The variety and diversity of the people gave him the material he needed.

Homeland names the person’s particular homeland (e.g., Athens). Find the narrative components and then write your answer.

- **Recognition**: Because Chaucer lived in the city and the country, he got further knowledge of human nature
- **Reversal**: which gave him further knowledge
- **Suffering**: e.g., moving and its inconveniences and losses
- **Agent**: Chaucer
- **Action**: He got further knowledge of human nature
- **Place**: London and the countryside
- **Manner**: e.g., surreptitiously, naturally
- **Cause**: He got further knowledge of human nature because he lived in both a city and in the country

Living in London and the countryside, he had the experiences of living both in a city and in the country, which gave him further knowledge of human nature.

**HEIGHTENER + ATTRIBUTION**

1. Read the directions; refer to Aphthonius’ example:
   - For it is not possible to find anything in existence superior to eloquence, nor to find anyone more skilled in eloquence than Thucydides.

2. Ask: What good can be attributed to the person?
   - writing poetically about the experiences of common people

3. Ask: How can we attribute this good to the person, again using a heightener?
   - Writing poetry about the experiences of common people was unheard of before Chaucer.

4. Have students write an answer.

2. **Birth, Source, or Origin** 90-100 words

**NATION**

1. Read the directions; refer to Aphthonius’ example:
   - Thucydides came from a land which gave him both life and art; for he was born in the very same place as eloquence.

2. Ask: What do we praise when writing about Nation?
   - country, government, ethnic group

3. Discuss the narrative components:
   - **Recognition**: What truth is demonstrated?
   - **Reversal**: What reveals the truth?
   - **Suffering**: What suffering occurs?
   - **Agent**: Who acts?
   - **Action**: What do the agents do?
   - **Time**: When is the action?
   - **Place**: Where is the action?
   - **Manner**: How is the action done?
   - **Cause**: Why is the action done?

4. Have students write an answer.

**ANCESTORS**

1. Read the directions; refer to Aphthonius’ example:
   - ... he had kings as ancestors, and his fortunes were enhanced by his ancestry

Ask: What do we praise when writing about Ancestors?
   - past forebears, genealogy, lineage

(See next page)
Lesson 2  •  Encomium on an Individual: Chaucer

Encomium on an Individual: Chaucer

Lesson 2

(Continued from previous)

2. Discuss the narrative components:

- Recognition - What truth is demonstrated?
- Reversal - What reveals the truth?
- Suffering - What suffering occurs?
- Agent - Who acts?
- Action - What do the agents do?
- Place - Where is the action?
- Manner - How is the action done?
- Cause - Why is the action done?

3. Have students write an answer.

PARENTS

1. Read the directions; refer to Aphthonius’ example:

- Possessing both powerful ancestry and citizenship of a democracy, he applied the advantage of each to the other’s correction; he allowed equality of speech to correct the injustice of wealth while avoiding the poverty of a common citizen by virtue of his prosperous descent.

2. Ask: What do we praise when writing about Parents?

- mother and father

- John and Agnes Chaucer, whose wealth ensured their son’s education

3. Discuss the narrative components:

- Recognition - What truth is demonstrated?
- Reversal - What reveals the truth?
- Suffering - What suffering occurs?
- Agent - Who acts?
- Action - What do the agents do?
- Place - Where is the action?
- Manner - How is the action done?
- Cause - Why is the action done?

4. Have students write an answer.

3. Education 80-90 words

PURSUITS

1. Read the directions; refer to Aphthonius’ example:

- Coming from such stock, Thucydides was reared under a constitution and laws manifestly superior to others.

2. Ask: What do we praise when writing about Pursuits?

- aspirations, passions, concerns

3. Discuss the narrative components:

- Recognition - What truth is demonstrated?
- Reversal - What reveals the truth?
- Suffering - What suffering occurs?
- Agent - Who acts?
- Action - What do the agents do?
- Place - Where is the action?
- Manner - How is the action done?
- Cause - Why is the action done?

4. Have students write an answer.
Chaucer was a man of many talents and had a broad knowledge of fifteenth-century Europe. He knew much about wine, rules of the court, government, and the ways of kings. He used his knowledge of society to write great novels. He did not hide his knowledge of daily life but brought it to light in his works. His work provided insight into the essence of human nature and motivation.

4. Achievements

Then you will adduce the most important head of Encomium, Achievements, which you will divide into Soul (e.g., courage, practical wisdom), Body (e.g., beauty, speed, strength), and Fortune (e.g., power, wealth, friends).

Soul
The Achievements section is the largest and most important section in an Encomium. It begins with a “cause” paragraph called Soul that tells generally what the person did with his soul, such as feeling certain emotions, spiritual drives, motivations and desires, and showing certain qualities or virtues (e.g., showed prudence). Find the narrative components and then write your answer.

Chaucer was a man of many talents and had a broad knowledge of fifteenth-century Europe. He knew much about wine, rules of the court, government, and the ways of kings. He used his knowledge of society to write great novels. He did not hide his knowledge of daily life but brought it to light in his works.

ART

1. Read the directions; refer to Aphthonius’ example:

Because he was able to live at once by arms and by eloquence, he aspired to combine in one person both culture and generalship; he neither divorced eloquence from arms nor set battles in the place of culture.

2. Ask: What do we praise when writing about Art?

- works, products, effects, imitation

3. Discuss the narrative components:

- Recognition - What truth is demonstrated?
- Reversal - What reveals the truth?
- Suffering - What suffering occurs?
- Agent - Who acts?
- Action - What do the agents do?
- Time - When is the action?
- Place - Where is the action?
- Manner - How is the action done?
- Cause - Why is the action done?

4. Have students write an answer.

CUSTOMS

1. Read the directions; refer to Aphthonius’ example:

He made a single practice out of things of which there is no single art, uniting in one what is separate by nature.

2. Ask: What do we praise when writing about Customs?

- effects on culture or environment

3. Discuss the narrative components:

- Recognition - What truth is demonstrated?
- Reversal - What reveals the truth?
- Suffering - What suffering occurs?
- Agent - Who acts?
- Action - What do the agents do?
- Time - When is the action?
- Place - Where is the action?
- Manner - How is the action done?
- Cause - Why is the action done?

4. Have students write an answer.

SOUL

1. Read the directions; refer to Aphthonius’ example:

When he reached adulthood, Thucydides sought an occasion to display the skills in which he had been well schooled previously.

2. Ask: What do we praise when writing about Soul?

- motivations, desires, non-physical qualities

3. Discuss the narrative components:

- Recognition - What truth is demonstrated?
- Reversal - What reveals the truth?
- Suffering - What suffering occurs?
- Agent - Who acts?
- Action - What do the agents do?
- Time - When is the action?
- Place - Where is the action?
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- Cause - Why is the action done?

4. Have students write an answer.

ART

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- Time - When is the action?
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4. Have students write an answer.
Lesson 2 • Encomium on an Individual: Chaucer

BODY

1. Read the directions; refer to Aphthonius’ example:

EX Fortune soon provided the war, and he made the deeds of all the Greeks his own art; he became custodian of what the war brought to pass. He did not allow time to conceal what each side did.

2. Ask: What kinds of things can we praise that have to do with Body?

» physical qualities; actions showing character

EX wrote books and poetry; diplomatic missions; civil administration; adviser to kings

3. Discuss the narrative components:

EX Recognition - What truth is demonstrated?

Reversal - What reveals the truth?

Suffering - What suffering occurs?

Agent - Who acts?

Action - What do the agents do?

Time - When is the action?

Place - Where is the action?

Manner - How is the action done?

Cause - Why is the action done?

4. Have students write an answer.

FORTUNE

1. Read the directions; refer to Aphthonius’ example:

EX The capture of Plataea is known; the ravaging of Attica was published; the Athenians’ voyages round the Peloponnessse was made known. Naupactus witnessed sea-battles, and Thucydides, by his writings, prevented these things from going unnoticed [etc.].

2. Ask: What do we praise when writing about Fortune?

» specific successes, accomplishments, legacy (include at least 5 examples)

EX established the Southern English dialect; gave birth to modern English; provided entertainment to millions of readers; wrote The Canterbury Tales; wrote The House of Fame; first poet buried in Poet’s Corner of Westminster Abbey; called Father of English literature

3. Discuss the narrative components:

EX Recognition - What truth is demonstrated?

Reversal - What reveals the truth?

Suffering - What suffering occurs?

Agent - Who acts?

Action - What do the agents do?

Time - When is the action?

Place - Where is the action?

Manner - How is the action done?

Cause - Why is the action done?

4. Have students write an answer.
5. Comparison

After these the Comparison, attaching greater weight to the subject of the Encomium through juxtaposition.

**Subject**

Subject asks if anyone will compare the person being praised to another specific person who is known for having done similar deeds.

May Dickens be compared to Chaucer?

**Difference**

Difference tells the difference between the purposes of their accomplishments.

Even though Dickens wrote about common English life, because he lacked the originality of Chaucer, he did not change English culture and language like Chaucer.

**Analogy**

Analogy compares the men in the form of an analogy.

To the degree that imitation is inferior to originality, Dickens is inferior to Chaucer.

6. Epilogue

Then an Epilogue, more akin to a prayer.

The final paragraph is a compound sentence saying that if there were more time, the person being praised could continue to be praised because of how praiseworthy he is.

There is much we could say about Chaucer, but the abundance of his praises could not be said in whole.

7. Final Draft

The Final Draft is a new context for practice in which to use and imitate proper writing mechanics and knowledge. Proofread your answers above and correct errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. On a separate sheet of paper, combine all the corrected answers into a final draft.

Add these figures:
- Dialogismus
- Onomatopoeia
- Effictio
- Synecdoche
- Hydrographia