

The 7 Liberal Arts and Sciences

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**“He shall climb by strength, but directed by wisdom; he shall progress by power, but guided by control; he shall rise by the might that is in him, but arrive by the wisdom of his heart.”
Brother Carl H. Claudy.**

Have you heard of the Trivium and the Quadrivium? These words can be found in both Masonic and Non-Masonic books. Trivium means; where three ways meet, as in a crossroads or public street, and during the Middle Ages, the common division of the seven liberal arts, comprised of Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic were named the Trivium.¹

Quadrivium means a place where four ways meet, and in the Middle Ages, the more advanced division of the Seven Liberal Arts, comprised of Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, and Music were named the Quadrivium.²

So the Seven Liberal Arts, which are a part of the lessons of Masonry, are also known as the Trivium and the Quadrivium.³ Reference to the Seven Liberal Arts can be found in some of the earliest Masonic Manuscripts. It is reported that in the 11th century these seven liberal arts were taught in schools, and Holinshed, who wrote in the 16th century says that they composed a part of the curriculum that was taught in universities. Speculative Masonry continues homage to these seven liberal arts and sciences and, they are an important part of the second degree. So when the Fellow Craft is learning of these seven liberal arts and sciences there is a connection between the operative Masons of the Middle Ages and today. Those operative Masons held a laudable ambition to elevate the character of the craft above the ordinary standard of workmen.⁴

Grammar forms with Logic and Rhetoric, a triad dedicated to the cultivation of Language. Sanctius says; Grammar rejects from language all solecisms⁵ and barbarous expressions; Logic is occupied with the truthfulness of language; and Rhetoric seeks only the adornment of language.⁶

Rhetoric supposes and requires a proper acquaintance with the rest of the liberal arts; because the first step toward adorning a talk is for the speaker to become thoroughly acquainted with its subject. Hence the ancient rule that the orator should be acquainted with all the arts and sciences.⁷

¹ The New Century Dictionary

² The New Century Dictionary

³ Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia

⁴ History of Freemasonry

⁵ A violation of the grammatical or other settled usage of a language. Referred originally to the bad Greek spoken at Soli.

⁶ Encyclopedia of Freemasonry Vol. 1 Pg 304

⁷ Encyclopedia of Freemasonry Vol. 2 Pg 622

Logic is the art of reasoning, and the power of right reasoning is deemed essential to the Mason, that he may comprehend both his rights and his duties.⁸

By Arithmetic the Mason is reminded that he is to continually add to his knowledge, never to subtract anything from the character of his neighbor, to multiply his benevolence to his fellow-creatures, and to divide his means with a suffering Brother.⁹

Geometry – Geometry and God, the letter “G” binds them together along with heaven and earth, the divine and the human, the infinite and the finite. Masons are taught to regard the universe as the grandest of all symbols, revealing to men, in all ages, the ideas which are eternally revolving in the mind of the Deity, and which it is their duty to reproduce in their own lives and in the world of art and industry.¹⁰

Music is recommended to the “attention of Masons, because the “concord of sweet sounds” elevates the generous sentiments of the soul, so should the concord of good feeling reign among the Brethren, that by the union of friendship and Brotherly Love the boisterous passions and harmony exist throughout the craft.”¹¹

“With Astronomy the system of Freemasonry is intimately connected.” Many of Masonry’s symbols and emblems come from Astronomy. The Lodge room itself is symbolic of the world, and it is adorned with symbols representing the sun and moon whose regularity and precision provides a lesson to the initiate.¹² The pillars of strength and establishment, and the spheres of the terrestrial and the celestial demonstrate the connection of Freemasonry with the heaven and earth, God and man.

Progressing through the seven liberal arts and sciences, as in one step after another, in the methods of communications; which is accomplished by Grammar and Rhetoric, to Logic; as a method of reasoning, to applying the principles of Arithmetic and Geometry; which is visualized as all science, to enjoying all the agreeable charms of Music; which is all that is beautiful, (poetry, art, sound, and nature,) and finally to Astronomy; which is a study of all that is beyond earth. All of the seven liberal arts and sciences together as the final steps toward the middle chamber where a Mason receives all the blessings of a life well lived, teaches the Mason that he must grow - he cannot stand still.¹³

⁸ Encyclopedia of Freemasonry Vol. 1 Pg 452

⁹ Encyclopedia of Freemasonry Vol. 1 Pg 76

¹⁰ Masonry Defined

¹¹ Encyclopedia of Freemasonry Vol. 2 pg 496

¹² Encyclopedia of Freemasonry Vol. 1 pg 84

¹³ The Craft and its Symbols