Cicero and His Ascent to Power

Marcus Tullius Cicero was born to an equestrian family in 106 B.C. near Arpinum, a town approximately 60 miles southeast of Rome. Since Arpinum’s citizens had only received Roman citizenship in 188 B.C., any of her citizens seeking a political career at Rome faced the difficulties of an outsider. Arpinum had, however, produced the famous general Gaius Marius who held the consulship at Rome seven times; thus Cicero had the advantage of a local precedent for political success. In order to insure the best chance of a public career at Rome, Cicero’s father saw to it that his gifted son received most of his education there. Cicero assumed the toga virilis in 91 B.C., and was apprenticed to Quintus Mucius Scaevola, the leading public speaker of the time. Cicero now spent most of his time observing the political and judicial orations at the Forum. In 89 B.C., Cicero served under Pompey the Great’s father in the Social War (90-88 B.C.), but emerged with no taste for military service. During the conflict between Marius and Sulla, Cicero continued studying rhetoric, and he avoided any serious entanglements between the competing factions. In 80 B.C., at the age of 26, Cicero delivered his first criminal speech in defense of Roscius, who was accused of murder by supporters of Sulla. This case was a bold choice for a novice speaker, because Sulla had recently carried out the bloody proscription of all of his political enemies. Cicero was successful in his defense, but the stress of his copious preparation of this and subsequent briefs left him physically exhausted. With the hope of honing his rhetorical skills and restoring his physical health, Cicero set out for Greece in 79 B.C. After studying with the leading Greek rhetoricians in Athens and Asia Minor, Cicero returned to Rome in 77 B.C. and sometime shortly thereafter married Terentia.

Cicero was now ready to begin his political career in earnest. His steady rise through the cursus honorum, the sequence of offices, would be all the more remarkable because of his status as a novus homo: He did not have any consuls among his ancestors. In 76 B.C., at the age of 31, he was elected quaestor, the first step in the cursus honorum. In 75 B.C., he proceeded to administer the finances of Sicily with fairness and restraint. The Sicilians remained grateful for that fairness. As a result of their trust, in 71 B.C. the Sicilians asked Cicero to prosecute Verres, the propurator of Sicily from 73-71 B.C. In spite of Verres’s extensive bribery of the judges, Cicero managed to bring the case to trial. Cicero faced a second challenge in that Verres had retained Hortensius, the leading lawyer in Rome. Cicero’s copious research and bold trial tactics, however, forced Verres to flee Rome after Cicero’s opening speech on the first day of the trial. Cicero carried off a huge victory both for the Sicilians and for his own standing at the bar. He later published a total of seven speeches which he had prepared for the case. Because of his energetic research and rhetorical polish, Cicero’s reputation in the courts now surpassed even Hortensius’s.

In 69 B.C., Cicero climbed the next step in the cursus honorum by serving as aedile. Although officially an optional office, most rising politicians preferred to hold it to exploit the opportunities it provided to curry favor with the public. Instead of the expensive gladiatorial games aediles often gave, Cicero sponsored the public production of Greek plays and provided the people with cheap meat from Sicily. In 66 B.C., his efforts in the courts and as aedile paid off: he was elected praetor at the top of the polls. In the same year, he delivered his first speech at a public meeting, a contio, in support of expanding Pompey’s command in the Mediterranean to include the war against Mithridates. Thus Cicero was perceived as aligned with Pompey against Crassus in spite of the fact that Pompey’s support for Cicero would always be moderate at best.

In 65 B.C., Cicero began campaigning for his election to the consulship. The elections were held in the summer of 64 B.C.; and once again Cicero came in at the top of the poll, with Gaius Antonius Hybrida, the uncle of Marc Antony, as the second consul. Lucius Sergius Catilina came in third. Since competition for the consulship had increased, it was very difficult for the young nobles to hold office at the youngest age allowed by law, or suo anno. Cicero’s election suo anno and his status as a novus homo threatened the members of the old families who saw election as their birthright. Thus, what Cicero counted as his greatest success, Catiline, the nobilis, saw as personal setback. Cicero would have to deal with the results of Catiline’s mounting disappointment throughout his consulship.
Catiline and Conspiracy

Catiline, born of an old noble family, initially had many supporters among the patricians. He had risen through the steps of the cursus honorum without interruption; but, when he returned in 66 B.C. from his propraetorship in Africa, African ambassadors had already arrived in Rome to protest his misrule. In spite of the allegations, Catiline decided to run for the consulship. Catiline's candidacy was further complicated by the fact that he was attempting to run in what was to be the second consular election of that summer. The winners of the first election had been successfully prosecuted on charges of bribery. Catiline's candidacy in the second election was disallowed supposedly because he had not stood in the original election, but early sources are not absolutely clear on the reasons for his disqualification. By his early and legally tenuous attempt to stand for the consulship, Catiline did reveal a certain disregard for both the judicial and electoral processes at Rome. This disregard would characterize his actions for the next three and a half years.

In 65 B.C., Catiline could not stand for election because he was still on trial for his misrule in Africa. Although he was eventually acquitted, Catiline's second chance to stand for the consulship had passed. Finally, in 64 B.C., Catiline stood for the consulship against Cicero, Antonius, and others. After a campaign of mudslinging, Catiline's and Antonius's support from the optimates, the aristocratic party, waned. The phenomenally wealthy Crassus dropped all his backing; Caesar, who would rely heavily on Crassus and other wealthy Romans in his bid for pontifex maximus in 63 B.C., no longer supported Catiline in spite of his patrician family. Thus, Cicero defeated men who had prominent political ties and family names. This rebuff further insulted Catiline's nobilitas.

In 63 B.C., the year of Cicero and Antonius's consulship, Catiline was forced to turn to less reputable citizens in his attempts to secure support for his election. Appealing to the financially distressed through his support for novae tabellae, or a cancellation of debts, he managed to alienate even further the support of the optimates. At the elections themselves,
Cicero felt enough of a threat from Catiline’s behavior that he dressed in a breastplate and was accompanied by an armed bodyguard. Catiline was again defeated. Having already garnered some support from the politically and financially dispossessed, he now began his preparations for revolution in earnest.

Catiline openly paraded himself in front of the sons of the men proscribed by Sulla, and nine men would eventually emerge as his chief organizers in Rome. Among these, Publius Cornelius Lentulus Sura, Gaius Cornelius Cethegus, Lucius Statilius, Publius Gabinius Capito, and Marcus Caeparius eventually emerged as the most brash and foolhardy. In Etruria, Gaius Manlius was enrolling men for his army. On October 19, Cicero called a meeting of the Senate to present vague evidence that Manlius was preparing an open insurrection at Faesulae, a town in northwest Etruria. That day or the following, Quintus Arrius brought specific information on the legion being equipped in Etruria and the plans for a coup d'état. Catiline himself, however, had been careful to avoid any traceable connection to that army in order to continue his operations in Rome. With the new information from Arrius, on October 21, the Senate became alarmed and passed the senatus consultum ultimum. This vague decree encouraged the consul to take any action necessary to stave off a threat to the state. Catiline now saw that his position in Rome was weakening. After aborting plans to have Manlius bring his troops closer to Rome, Catiline called a meeting on the evening of November 6 to parcel out commands throughout Rome and the southern districts of Italy. Catiline also arranged for Cicero to be murdered the next morning. Since Cicero by now had a good network of informers, he turned back the would-be murderers the next day, November 7. On November 8, Cicero called a meeting of the Senate at the temple of Jupiter Stator, since that building was easier to defend than the Curia.

Cicero may have assumed, because Catiline had failed to destabilize Rome from within, that Catiline would depart for Etruria before the meeting. Cicero, then, could use that departure as strong evidence of Catiline’s part in the revolution. In a direct challenge to Cicero’s authority, Catiline came to the meeting since he knew that Cicero in fact had no concrete evidence. Cicero then delivered a speech that surely must have had many improvised elements, given the unexpected
presence of Catiline. Later known as the *First Catilinarian Oration*, this speech still stands as a masterpiece of invective. The difficulty of Cicero’s position, however, is clearly revealed: It was one thing for the Senate to disapprove of Catiline’s actions, but quite another to condemn a fellow *nobilis* without evidence. It is important in reading the speech to note both Cicero’s rhetorical polish and his caution. As for Catiline, sources differ on his reaction to the speech: Either he left the Senate without word, or he denied any knowledge of a conspiracy — playing on the audience’s possible sympathy. Whatever his immediate reaction, he departed from Rome that night to join Manlius at Faesulae.

The following day, November 9, Cicero delivered before the people the *Second Catilinarian Oration* to inform them of the events in the Senate the day before. Around the middle of November, Catiline had reached Faesulae; he and Manlius were now in open revolt, and the Senate declared both men *hostes*, enemies of the state. At the beginning of December, envoys from the Allobroges, a Gallic tribe, were approached by the conspirators and asked for their support since their northern position would protect the rear of Catiline’s army. The Allobroges immediately went to their tribe’s hereditary Roman patron, Quintus Fabius Sanga, and asked for advice. After consulting with Cicero, Sanga instructed the envoys to play along with the conspirators and ask the conspirators for written and sealed descriptions of the conspiracy. With amazing naiveté, the conspirators agreed to supply the envoys with the letters. Early in the morning of December 3, the Allobroges and Titus Volturnius, who quickly turned state’s evidence, were arrested as they crossed the Mulvian bridge about two miles north of Rome. (This bridge — also known as the Milvian bridge — was also the site of Constantine’s great victory in A.D. 312.) The envoys of the Allobroges, after feigning resistance and handing over documents obtained from the conspirators, were released. Additionally, Cicero ordered Cethegus’s house to be searched, and a cache of arms was found. The five chief conspirators who could be linked to the conspiracy through the letters or eyewitneses were ordered to be arrested. Cicero then called a meeting of the Senate, wherein the letters to the Allobroges were

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**Via Sacra.** This view of the Forum looks to the southeast along the *Via Sacra*. The *rostra* and *comitum* are to the left.

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read and the conspirators confessed. Afterward, he
came before the people in the Forum and delivered the
Third Catilinarian Oration, in which he detailed
the proceedings. The Senate met again on the next
day and declared that the conspirators had acted contra rem publicam.

On December 5, Cicero called another meeting
of the Senate to decide the handling of the five con-
spirators arrested at Rome. Most senators spoke for
immediate execution without trial, but Caesar, adopt-
ing what would become his trademark popularis
stance, rose in opposition to this unconstitutional
action. Seeing that a majority favored summary pun-
ishment, Cicero interrupted the debate and in the Fourth
Catilinarian Oration carefully redirected the argument
towards support for the death penalty. Cato, the archconservative who already that year had proved himself zealous in the enforcement of bribery laws,
rose in support of the decisive action. The Senate
agreed: Lentulus, Cethegus, and the three others were
immediately taken to the Tullianum and choked to
death while the crowd waited outside to hear word of
the executions. As a result of his energy and dedica-
tion to the Republic, Cicero was hailed pater patriae.

Cicero’s support was not universal, however. On
December 10, Quintus Caecilius Metellus Nepos was
elected tribune of the plebs; he later declared that any-
one who has executed a Roman citizen without trial
should not be allowed to speak before the people. Ac-
cordingly, Nepos did not allow Cicero to give the final
oration traditionally delivered on a consul’s last day of
office. In order to undercut Nepos’s de facto gag or-
der, in his departing oath Cicero swore that he alone
had saved the Republic. On January 3 of 62 B.C., the
Senate passed a resolution indemnifying all those who
had acted against the conspirators. Nepos, frustrated
by the action, immediately left Rome in protest, and
Caesar, after being duly chastised, stayed quietly in
Rome. Outside of Rome, Antonius pursued Catiline’s
one legion until its defeat near Pistoria in mid-January
of 62 B.C. Thus the conspiracy was stopped without
posing any real threat to the state.

Cicero after the Conspiracy

In spite of the Senate’s decree, Cicero would soon
find himself vulnerable to the vicissitudes of Roman
politics. In 62 B.C., Clodius, an erstwhile member of
the nobility, was caught at the rites of the Bona Dea
being held at Julius Caesar’s house. Men were strictly
forbidden from these rites, and accordingly Clodius was
brought to trial. He claimed that he had not even been
in Rome at the time, but Cicero rose to say that he had
seen Clodius in Rome just hours before the ceremony.
By destroying Clodius’s alibi, Cicero had acquired a
bitter personal enemy. Over the next few years, Cicero
also found himself opposing the interests of Rome’s
most powerful men. In 60 B.C., Caesar, Pompey, and
Crassus formed the so-called First Triumvirate, which
in fact was only an informal agreement that none of
them would take any major actions without first con-
sulting the other two. Cicero spoke publicly against
this alliance. Thus, in 59 B.C., the consul Caesar al-
lowed Clodius to be adopted into a plebeian family,
and accordingly Clodius could be elected to the office
of tribune of the plebs. When he became tribune, his
first action was to exile anyone who had put a citizen
to death without trial. The initial proclamation, al-
though it did not name Cicero, was clearly directed at
him for his actions in 63 B.C. Soon, however, Clodius
had another resolution passed that specifically named
Cicero. Although he delayed as long as he could,
Cicero was forced to leave Italy by March of 58 B.C.
After his departure, his house on the Palatine was
burned by Clodius’s mob.

By 57 B.C., as the other triumvirs were getting
disgusted with Clodius’s wretched excesses, Cicero re-
gained some favor among the triumvirs. Pompey then
became an open supporter of Cicero’s return. As soon
as the decree for his recall was passed by the Senate,
Cicero crossed over from Greece to Brundisium and
made his trip back to Rome at a leisurely pace. He
was greeted by cheers in all the towns along the Appian
Way.

During the 50s B.C., Caesar was in Gaul, while
Crassus attempted a military campaign against the
Parthians. Crassus was defeated and killed at Carrhae
in Mesopotamia, and accordingly the political setting
at Rome was now dominated by Pompey. In 51 B.C.,
Cicero finally accepted a proconsulship in Cilicia in
Asia Minor and departed for that province in July. He
governed fairly, if not with any major distinction, in
spite of resolving some minor border skirmishes. When
he returned to Rome in 49 B.C., civil war was immi-
inent. He tried to negotiate a compromise between
Pompey and Caesar, but to no avail. Eventually, after
hesitating a great deal, he followed Pompey to Greece
where Pompey was defeated at Pharsalus in August of
48 B.C. After a pardon by Caesar, Cicero retired from
public life and spent his time on the writing of philosophy. In 46 B.C., Cicero divorced Terentia and married Publilia, a wealthy girl for whom he had been guardian. Early in 45 B.C., Cicero’s daughter, Tullia, died. This loss sent him into depression and the further writing of philosophy. After Publilia did not show proper grief over the loss of Tullia, Cicero divorced her as well.

In 44 B.C., after Caesar’s assassination, Cicero made his final ascent to political influence. Hoping to reconcile himself with Antony, he returned to Rome, but Antony rebuffed him. In August he began a series of speeches known as the Philippiics since they resembled in characterization and inventive the speeches of Demosthenes against Philip of Macedon. The fourteen surviving speeches are harshly critical of Antony’s personal and public character. Antony and his wife Fulvia took deep offense. In 43 B.C., Octavian, Antony and Lepidus acquired from the Senate absolute authority as a triumvirate “to restore the Republic.” They took this opportunity to exact revenge on individuals and issued a proscription list, as Sulla had done. Cicero’s name was one of the first on that list. Cicero fled Rome; but, after his ship was blown back by winds at Caieta near Formiae, he retreated to his villa at Formiae where Antony’s men caught up with him. In spite of a last-minute effort to escape, Cicero finally offered his head to his murderers. At Antony’s order, Marcus Tullius Cicero was murdered on December 7, 43 B.C.: his head and hands were then cut off and nailed to the rostra in the Forum.

**Roman Oratory**

Roman oratory challenges us with an aspect of culture that is surprisingly different from our own. Today, since speech-making is only one small part of a larger image presented through the media, a public figure often seeks not to make mistakes rather than to project a strong, intelligent persona. For Romans, however, oratory was central to their effectiveness as public leaders, since oratory’s primary purpose was to persuade an audience to approve of the speaker’s point of view. Even Romans who were most famous as generals were often evaluated on their ability to speak persuasively. Therefore, Romans paid careful attention to oratorical practice from early in their history.

In the middle of the second century B.C., Greek models for developing speaking skills started gaining acceptance, and affluent Romans traveled to Athens and Rhodes to study rhetoric. The earliest treatise that still survives, the Rhetorica ad Herennium, dates from the 80s B.C. and roughly coincides with Cicero’s own education in rhetoric. Following Greek rhetoric closely, it gives the three broad categories of speaking as judicial (legal speeches), deliberative (speeches advocating a course of action), and demonstrative (speeches of praise or blame). Further, it prescribes that a student know the theory of speech composition, imitate models, and practice exercises. Within the theory of speech composition, there are five parts of speech development: invention (roughly equivalent to research), arrangement, style, memory, and delivery (Rhetorica ad Herennium Lii.3). Throughout the educational process, students were exhorted to practice exercises in memory and delivery. Additionally, an older Roman adolescent frequently visited the Forum to hear speeches in the courts.

When the young citizen matured, his formal education ended. Now he would hope to have a chance to begin his speaking career either in the courts or as a minor speaker before the Senate. The courts in the Forum conducted business nearly every non-festival day. For a novus homo of Cicero’s disposition, the prominence gained from judicial oratory was an essential tool for his political ambition, because it provided a chance to curry favor with the prominent families of Rome. A second venue for speaking was the contio, or a political speech before the general citizenry. A contio was delivered before an assembly (comitia) in explanation of senatorial legislation, or to rally the support of the people on a particular issue. As a Roman rose in prominence and political connections, he could expect more opportunities to speak at contiones. Finally, oratory directly influenced the debates in the Senate, and a man’s influence could be seen from his prominence in senatorial debates. The most influential men were allowed to speak earlier in senatorial debates; that is, the most prestigious man would be asked to state his opinion to the Senate first. Strong speaking skills only bolstered one’s influence in these debates.

Since oratory had such a prominent position in the political process, the Romans needed to pay attention to the many details that would create an effective speech. Among these was the formal organization of a speech. Although the divisions vary, the Rhetorica ad Herennium (I.iii.4) gives the following six parts of a judicial speech: the exordium, the introduction; the narratio, in which the speaker gives the facts; the propositio, a statement of what is agreed upon and
what is contested; the **confirmatio**, a presentation of the proofs in support of the case; the **refutatio**, which argues against the opponent's points; and the **peroratio**, the conclusion, which often makes a strong emotional appeal to the audience. Although speakers tried to adhere to this pattern, individual situations often demanded the omission of one or more sections. Since the *First Catilinarian Oration* was delivered before the Senate, the text does not strictly follow the prescribed judicial organization — the speech, in fact, defies such a pat analysis. Cicero does, however, use many of the argumentative techniques common to the formal sections of a judicial speech.

In addition to organization, a Roman speaker crafted his language to match his particular purpose and audience. **Style** — the elements that combine to make a speaker's language distinctive — emerges from many different verbal techniques, or figures. Quintilian, the first century A.D. rhetorician, defines a figure as "any form of speech changed by skill" (*Institutio Oratoria* IX.i.14). In other words, any intentional deviation from everyday language could be considered a figure. This broad definition, unfortunately, does little to limit exactly what a figure is. In fact, rhetoricians in the classical and Renaissance periods identified over 200 different figures. While simply memorizing vast lists of figures will do little to help us understand Cicero, an understanding of the most common figures will deepen our appreciation of his oratorical skill. The following glossary contains some of the many figures commonly used by Cicero.

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*Marcus Tullius Cicero*
GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND FIGURES OF SPEECH

Figures of Speech are indicated by italics and are followed by line number(s) of a prominent example in the text.

Aedile: The second office in the cursus honorum; responsibilities: public works projects, organizing and paying for the public games.

Alliteration: The repetition of a consonant sound, usually at the beginning of successive words. (100)

Allusion: A brief reference to information with which the author assumes the audience is familiar, but which is outside the context of a work. The goal of such a reference is to bring to the audience a deeper understanding or appreciation. (21)

Amicitia: An informal, long-standing alliance between patrons who regarded the standing and interests of their “friends” before making any political decisions.

Analogy: An extended form of simile which compares two categorically dissimilar items, ideas or objects in order to explain the less familiar in terms of the more familiar. (296-299)

Anaphora: The repetition of the same word(s) at the beginning of successive clauses or phrases. (6-8)

Antithesis: A rhetorical balancing of opposite ideas or phrases for a sense of emphasis or contrast. (38-39)

Asyndeton: The omission of customary connecting words to create a “rapid-fire” effect. (86-89)

Bona Dea: A Roman religious ceremony attended only by the women of Rome. Not too much is known of the proceedings, except that Clodius, disguised as a woman, interrupted the ceremony in 62 B.C.

Campus Martius: The field just to the north and west of the Pomerium in the flood plain of the Tiber. The Romans originally used it to marshal troops, but later it was used primarily as assembly point for the comitia centuriata.

Censor: The highest political office in Rome, which gave the holders sweeping powers. Two were elected at five year intervals for an eighteen month term; responsibilities: expelling from the Senate members who no longer meet the property or moral qualifications, administering the census of citizens, and the letting of public works projects.

Chiasmus: A “crossing over.” An ABBA or ABCBA, etc., arrangement of elements in a line. (62)

Climax: The highpoint of an argument following a crescendo. (211)

Comitia: The assemblies of the people called by groups. The most common in Cicero’s time were the comitia tributa which distributed all citizens into 35 tribes; and the comitia centuriata which divided the citizenry among 193 centuries based upon age and property qualifications. The major comitia’s most prominent role was the election of public officials.

Comitium: The assembly area in front of the Curia where the general public was addressed from the rostra.

Confirmatio: Usually the fourth section of a speech in which the proofs are presented and the argument is developed.

Consul: The highest office in the cursus honorum, roughly equivalent to a mayor-president. Two people held the office each year.

Contio: A form of comitia in which all people were summoned without regard to group. Usually the contio convened near the rostra to hear debate on proposed legislation or an explanation of senatorial action.

Crescendo: The gradual building of words or phrases in order of importance or intensity. (223-226)

Curia: The Senate house.

Cursus Honorum: The customary sequence of elected offices (also called the gradus honorum at 265): quaestor, aedile, praetor, consul. Officially, one did not have to be an aedile, but most people elected to serve this office in order to garner votes for the remaining offices.

Dictator: Usually appointed in a state of emergency, the office lasted a maximum of six months and gave the holder absolute authority to settle a crisis. Originally known as the magister populi, “master of the infantry,” he appointed the magister equitum as his chief assistant.
Ellipsis: The omission of words which must be understood from context. (45-47)

Equites (Equestrian): The wealthy middle class of businessmen.

Exordium: The introductory section of a speech.

Forum: The main marketplace in Rome and site of the law courts.

Hendiadys: “One through two,” i.e., using two nouns to express one idea, an idea usually best translated by treating one noun as if it were an adjective modifying the other noun. (77)

Hostis: An enemy of the res publica, upon whom Rome could declare war and kill without trial.

Hyperbaton: The placement of an adjective far before the noun it modifies in order to emphasize the intensity of the adjective. (101-103)

Hyperbole: A gross exaggeration to make a point, but not to be taken literally. (83)

Irony: Saying one thing and meaning the opposite. (221-223)

Juxtaposition: “A placing side by side” of two elements for contrast and emphasis. (204-205)

Litotes: Using two negatives to make a vague positive. (142)

Magister Equitum: “The Master of the Cavalry” who was appointed by a dictator to represent his authority either on the field of battle or at Rome.

Metaphor: An implied comparison without the use of “like” or “as.” (118)

Metonymy: Naming one thing by something closely associated with it. (82)

Narratio: Usually the second section of a speech in which the facts of the situation are laid out.

Nobles: The class of families who had a consul among their ancestors.

Nobilitas: The political clout a family accrued first from having a consul among their ancestors and second from the “name recognition” and political ties (amicitia) that usually ensured political advancement.

Novae Tabellae: “New tables,” meaning a cancellation of all debts.

Novus Homo: The first man in his family to rise in the cursus honorum to the level of praetor or consul, or the first family member to become a senator.

Optimates: “The best men,” meaning the aristocratic group of patricians who wished for the true power in the Roman government to reside with the Senate, not the popular assemblies.

Oxymoron: The use of two logically contradictory adjectives or terms to describe the same noun. (170)

Palatine: The hill to the south of the Forum in Rome where the wealthiest people lived.

Pater Patriae: “Father of the Fatherland,” an honorific title first given to Cicero after stopping Catiline, but later adopted by Julius Caesar, Augustus and some emperors.

Patres (Patrician): The moneyed upper class who were officially not allowed to engage in business.

Period (Periodic Sentence): A long sentence in which the main idea is delayed until the end after a series of related thoughts. The balancing of nouns, adjectives, verbs, or whole clauses lends greater emphasis and complexity to the main thought. (223-226)

Peroratio: The conclusion of a speech, often in the form of a prayer or request.

Persona: The personality of the author or speaker in a literary or oratorical context. This personality must be inferred from the tone and style.

Personification: Giving human characteristics to non-human beings or objects. (170-179)

Plebs (Plebeian): The lower class of Roman citizens not among the equestrian or patrician order.

Pomerium: The sacred area marking the official boundary of Rome, inside of which no armed forces were allowed while the city was secure.

Pontifex Maximus: The chief priest in Rome who was an elected official responsible for overseeing the major priestly colleges and the Vestal Virgins.
Popularis: Literally, "of the people." This adjective described any attempt to curry favor with or enact policy through the people rather than the Senate.

Praeteritio: Claiming that a point will not be mentioned but mentioning it anyway. This technique allows the speaker to introduce marginally relevant information in an attempt to prove a point by innuendo rather than by evidence. (20-22)

Praetor: The third office in the cursus honorum; the responsibilities pertain to the courts; similar to a modern judgeship.

Proposito: Usually the third section of a speech in which the points of agreement and contention are enumerated.

Propraetor: A term describing the governor of a province who was a praetor in Rome the previous year.

Quaestor: The first office in the cursus honorum; responsibilities included overseeing money and accounts in either Rome or a province.

Refutatio: Usually the fifth section of a speech in which arguments against the opponent's stance are presented.

Rhetoric/Rhetorical: A term derived from the Greek word for speaker, which has come to mean the art or skill of persuasion.

Rhetorical Question: A question to which no answer is expected; used to draw the audience into a particular line of thought, often without the expectation of careful analysis of the logical argument. (4-11)

Rostra: The speakers' platform in the Forum, to which were attached the prows of captured ships.

Senatus Consultum Ultimum: "The final decree of the Senate" which declared a state of emergency. The consuls were granted extraordinary powers to eliminate threats to the Republic — including the power to override other laws or to violate the rights of citizens. Thus, the decree is roughly equivalent to a declaration of martial law. The consuls, however, could be brought to censure after leaving office if they acted too strongly against politically powerful people.

Simile: A comparison using "like" or "as." (36-37)

Style: The author's characteristic use of diction and figures of speech for a specific effect.

Suo Anno: Election to the consulship at the youngest eligible age, i.e., 43 years of age.

Syncopation: The dropping of an unaccented syllable in the middle of a word. (110)

Synecdoche: Naming something by a part instead of the whole. (112)

Toga Virilis: The plain white toga worn by most citizens.

Tribune of the Plebs: Ten in number, these magistrates had the power of veto over any decrees of the Senate or legislation passed by the comitia. The office was originally designed to protect plebeian interests.

Tricolon: A grouping of three words or phrases at the summation of a point. (101)

Tullianum: In the prison next to the Curia this was the lowest chamber where executions took place.

Veto: The power of the tribune of the plebs to bar any senatorial legislation from becoming law.