

# Quintilian Quotes

*Mind, Men, Writing, Vices, Memories, Ambition, Evil, Pleasure, Teacher, Liars,  
Too Late, Boys, Doe, Language, Easier, Life, Opportunity, Art, Father, Giving*

Whilst we deliberate how to begin a thing, it grows too late to begin it.

~Quintilian

We should not speak so that it is possible for the audience to understand us, but so that it is impossible for them to misunderstand us.

~Quintilian

We excuse our sloth under the pretext of difficulty.

~Quintilian

Write quickly and you will never write well; write well, and you will soon write quickly.

~Quintilian

One should aim not at being possible to understand, but at being impossible to misunderstand.

~Quintilian

While we are making up our minds as to when we shall begin. the opportunity is lost.

~Quintilian

A mediocre speech supported by all the power of delivery will be more impressive than the best speech unaccompanied by such power.

~Quintilian

Study depends on the goodwill of the student, a quality that cannot be secured by compulsion.

~Quintilian

We must form our minds by reading deep rather than wide.

~Quintilian

An evil-speaker differs from an evil-doer only in the want of opportunity.

~Quintilian

The perfection of art is to conceal art.

~Quintilian

There is no one who would not rather appear to know than to be taught.

~Quintilian

God, that all-powerful Creator of nature and architect of the world, has impressed man with no character so proper to distinguish him from other animals, as by the faculty of speech.

~Quintilian

Though ambition in itself is a vice, yet it is often the parent of virtues.  
[Lat., Licet ipsa vitium sit ambitio, frequenter tamen causa virtutem est.]

~Quintilian

Those who wish to appear wise among fools, among the wise seem foolish.

~Quintilian

In almost everything, experience is more valuable than precept.

~Quintilian

Prune what is turgid, elevate what is commonplace, arrange what is disorderly, introduce rhythm where the language is harsh, modify where it is too absolute.

~Quintilian

For the mind is all the easier to teach before it is set.

~Quintilian

Vain hopes are like certain dreams of those who wake.

~Quintilian

A liar should have a good memory.

~Quintilian

Satiety is a neighbor to continued pleasures. [Lat., Continuis voluptatibus vicina satietas.]

~Quintilian

Everything that has a beginning comes to an end.

~Quintilian

Our minds are like our stomachs; they are whetted by the change of their food, and variety supplies both with fresh appetite.

~Quintilian

For it would have been better that man should have been born dumb, nay, void of all reason, rather than that he should employ the gifts of Providence to the destruction of his neighbor.

~Quintilian

Ambition is a vice, but it may be the father of virtue.

~Quintilian

Give bread to a stranger, in the name of the universal brotherhood which binds together all men under the common father of nature.

~Quintilian

Forbidden pleasures alone are loved immoderately; when lawful, they do not excite desire.

~Quintilian

To my mind the boy who gives least promise is one in whom the critical faculty develops in advance of the imagination.

~Quintilian

A laugh costs too much when bought at the expense of virtue.

~Quintilian

A great part of art consists in imitation. For the whole conduct of life is based on this: that what we admire in others we want to do ourselves.

~Quintilian

In a crowd, on a journey, at a banquet even, a line of thought can itself provide its own seclusion.

~Quintilian

Without natural gifts technical rules are useless.

~Quintilian

The obscurity of a writer is generally in proportion to his incapacity.

~Quintilian

It is worth while too to warn the teacher that undue severity in correcting faults is liable at times to discourage a boy's mind from effort.

~Quintilian

It is the heart which inspires eloquence.

~Quintilian

Consequently the student who is devoid of talent will derive no more profit from this work than barren soil from a treatise on agriculture.

~Quintilian

Sayings designed to raise a laugh are generally untrue and never

complimentary. Laughter is never far removed from derision.

~Quintilian

The mind is exercised by the variety and multiplicity of the subject matter, while the character is moulded by the contemplation of virtue and vice.

~Quintilian

To swear, except when necessary, is becoming to an honorable man. [Lat., In totum jurare, nisi ubi necesse est, gravi viro parum convenit.]

~Quintilian

When we cannot hope to win, it is an advantage to yield.

~Quintilian

The prosperous can not easily form a right idea of misery.

~Quintilian

When defeat is inevitable, it is wisest to yield.

~Quintilian

The learned understand the reason of art; the unlearned feel the pleasure.

~Quintilian

Nothing is more dangerous to men than a sudden change of fortune.

~Quintilian

While we are examining into everything we sometimes find truth where we least expected it.

~Quintilian

The soul languishing in obscurity contracts a kind of rust, or abandons itself to the chimera of presumption; for it is natural for it to acquire

something, even when separated from any one.

~Quintilian

The pretended admission of a fault on our part creates an excellent impression.

~Quintilian

It seldom happens that a premature shoot of genius ever arrives at maturity.

~Quintilian

For comic writers charge Socrates with making the worse appear the better reason.

~Quintilian

That which prematurely arrives at perfection soon perishes.

~Quintilian

He who speaks evil only differs from his who does evil in that he lacks opportunity.

~Quintilian

It is fitting that a liar should be a man of good memory.

~Quintilian

The gifts of nature are infinite in their variety, and mind differs from mind almost as much as body from body.

~Quintilian

One thing, however, I must premise, that without the assistance of natural capacity, rules and precepts are of no efficacy.

~Quintilian

Though ambition may be a fault in itself, it is often the mother of virtues.

~Quintilian

As regards parents, I should like to see them as highly educated as possible, and I do not restrict this remark to fathers alone.

~Quintilian

Suffering itself does less afflict the senses than the apprehension of suffering.

~Quintilian

Where evil habits are once settled, they are more easily broken than mended.

~Quintilian

It is easier to do many things than to do one thing continuously for a long time.

~Quintilian

If you direct your whole thought to work itself, none of the things which invade eyes or ears will reach the mind.

~Quintilian

Verse satire indeed is entirely our own.

~Quintilian

Men of quality are in the wrong to undervalue, as they often do, the practise of a fair and quick hand in writing; for it is no immaterial accomplishment.

~Quintilian

Conscience is a thousand witnesses.

~Quintilian

Those who wish to appear learned to fools, appear as fools to the



learned.

~Quintilian

Fear of the future is worse than one's present fortune.

~Quintilian

That which offends the ear will not easily gain admission to the mind.

~Quintilian

Although virtue receives some of its excellencies from nature, yet it is perfected by education. [Lat., Virtus, etiamsi quosdam impetus a natura sumit, tamen perficienda doctrina est.]

~Quintilian

Nothing can be pleasing which is not also becoming.

~Quintilian

A liar must have a good memory. -Mendacem oportet esse memorem

~Quintilian

She abounds with luscious faults.

~Quintilian

(Slaughter) means blood and iron. [Lat., Coedes videtur significare sanguinem et ferrum.]

~Quintilian

A man who tries to surpass another may perhaps succeed in equaling inot actually surpassing him, but one who merely follows can never quite come up with him: a follower, necessarily, is always behind.

~Quintilian

From writing rapidly it does not result that one writes well, but from writing well it results that one writes rapidly.

~Quintilian

By writing quickly we are not brought to write well, but by writing well we are brought to write quickly.

~Quintilian

Let us never adopt the maxim, Rather lose our friend than our jest.

~Quintilian

While we ponder when to begin, it becomes too late to do.

~Quintilian

Too exact, and studious of similitude rather than of beauty. [Lat., *Nimis in veritate, et similitudinis quam pulchritudinis amantior.*]

~Quintilian

It is the nurse that the child first hears, and her words that he will first attempt to imitate.

~Quintilian

For all the best teachers pride themselves on having a large number of pupils and think themselves worthy of a bigger audience.

~Quintilian

A Woman who is generous with her money is to be praised; not so, if she is generous with her person

~Quintilian

Lately we have had many losses.

~Quintilian

Usage is the best language teacher.

~Quintilian

A religion without mystics is a philosophy.

~Quintilian

A liar ought to have a good memory.

~Quintilian

Virtue, though she gets her beginning from nature, yet receives her finishing touches from learning.

~Quintilian

Medicine for the dead is too late

~Quintilian

It is much easier to try one's hand at many things than to concentrate one's powers on one thing.

~Quintilian

Men, even when alone, lighten their labors by song, however rude it may be.

~Quintilian

Nature herself has never attempted to effect great changes rapidly.

~Quintilian

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