

Gorgias extracts

The passages to read are small sections of the Gorgias dialogue and are available, as part of the complete Gorgias dialogue, prepared by the [Perseus Digital Library Project](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu). Editor. Gregory R. Crane. Tufts University. <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>>. Four topics are notable: Socrates rejects rhetoric and other arts; on the other hand he uses a range of rhetorical devices to obtain agreement; he sees orderliness as “good”; and he claims he is not interested in convincing a large audience of his views.

The table below gives links to the relevant sections of the text reporting Socrates’ views translated into English; the right hand column gives a brief interpretation of the original, translated text.

Note: You may find the option to *chunk* the text into pages easier to read than the default *section* option. The option is available on the Perseus page on the lower left when I last looked. You will have to set it each time you look at a new section.

Paragraph	Gist of the text
Gorgias 455a	Rhetoric is about persuading people.
Gorgias 456c	Gorgias claims someone skilled in rhetoric is more persuasive than any expert.
Gorgias 458c	In spite of Socrates’ declared disfavour of public events it is clear that his conversations with Gorgias is in front of an audience who are entertained.
Gorgias 459a , Gorgias 459b , Gorgias 459c	Skill in rhetoric enables someone to persuade the ignorant
Gorgias 465a	In arguing to debase rhetoric Socrates asserts anything irrational cannot involve expertise.
Gorgias 474a	Socrates neither has the interest nor the skill to persuade lots of people. Dealing with one person is enough.
Gorgias 475e	Socrates is satisfied with the agreement of one person
Gorgias 476a	Socrates only needs the agreement of one person.
Gorgias 482a	Philosophy is universal and unchanging.
Gorgias 484d	Philosophers are out of touch with everyday life.
Gorgias 487e	Socrates requires agreement of just one person to declare the truth of a point
Gorgias 493d	Socrates links happiness to orderliness.
Gorgias 501a , Gorgias 501b	Socrates suggests arts like cooking provide immediate gratification, are irrational, require no expertise and are based solely on experience and habit.
Gorgias 501d , Gorgias 501e , Gorgias 502a , Gorgias 502b , Gorgias 502c	Socrates, by discussing a number of examples, claims the arts provide only gratification.

Gorgias 502d	Socrates gloats over finding a form of rhetorical performance that is aimed solely at gratification.
Gorgias 502e	Socrates dismisses the public arts as pandering to peoples want of immediate gratification.
Gorgias 503d , Gorgias 503e , Gorgias 504a	“Good” speeches are given by people with a clear objective that leads to orderliness.
Gorgias 506c	Callicles just wants the conversation to end but Socrates goes on.
Gorgias 507a	Callicles politely asks Socrates to go on.
Gorgias 510a	Callicles agrees a point so Socrates can get on and finish by now the dialogue has almost become a monologue.
Gorgias 511d	Socrates compares rhetoric with piloting a ferryboat: useful but not special.
Gorgias 512b , Gorgias 512c , Gorgias 512d	Socrates refers to engineers in a passage saying it is not prolonging life that should be our aim but living a good life.
Gorgias 521d	Socrates claims he is the only real statesman in Athens
Gorgias 521e , Gorgias 522a	But people, he presumed, won’t accept his harsh medicine.
Gorgias 523a	In spite of his disdain for rhetoric, towards the end of the dialogue Socrates uses the rhetorical device of telling a story to get his point across.
Gorgias 526c	The philosopher who does not interfere with other people’s lives will ultimately be rewarded.
Gorgias 527c	Those following Socrates’ recipe for moral improvement will be happy even in the afterlife
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