Erasmus and other writers continued the trend towards developing verbal arts. Erasmus in particular was concerned with producing in students the skills necessary to be able to choose from a vast storehouse of possible word choices. And so, we shall continue in this vein and work up a sentence of your choosing. I hope by doing so, you gain a deeper sense of what authors like Erasmus were trying to do by having readings work through a specific phase in painstaking detail in order to unlock its potential.

So, take a basic sentence. This can be a movie quotation, one of your favorite phrases, anything. You might choose, for example, “Studying the history of rhetoric is essential to a good college education.” Erasmus used, “Your letter pleased me very much,” so we’re not dealing with the most gripping prose. You should then, as Erasmus instructs, work up this phrase.

1. Identify alternative words for the:
   - subject
   - verb
   - object
   - adverbs
   - adjectives

2. Form the sentence using different verbs and constructions
   - through different verbs
   - in passive voice
   - change into the negative

3. Use figures
   - use a metaphor
   - make a comparison by simile
   - use an example
   - in a poetic fashion