

Name:

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# Rhetorical Appeals (Ethos, Pathos, Logos)

Watch the video, read the transcript, and answer the questions given.



Every commercial you watch, every conversation you join, and every argument you have about who is the GOAT, includes at least one of three rhetorical appeals: ethos, pathos, and logos. Rhetoric, or the art of persuasion, always incorporates these appeals. Whenever you read a text, or argue with a buddy about which is better - tacos or hamburgers - you use ethos, pathos or logos, or (if you are good) you use a combination of all three.



## Ethos

Ethos is a rhetorical appeal that appeals to credibility, trust, character, and ethics. To be persuasive, it is important that a writer or speaker is trusted and seen as credible by their audience. Here are some ways you can integrate ethos into your writing and speaking:

1) Use credible sources to support your arguments. For example, which one of these arguments do you think is the most persuasive.

“A 75-year study by Harvard found that relationships have a powerful influence over your health and longevity.”

Or

“After taking six days to contemplate my life, it is clear that relationships have a powerful influence on health.”

Both statements make similar claims: relationships impact health. However, the second statement is based on personal experience, and only “six days of contemplation.” While the first statement is supported by 75 years of research from Harvard - a prestigious university. Therefore, the first claim is more trustworthy and credible than the second, and thus more persuasive.

2) You can also integrate ethos into your writing and speaking by using the appropriate tone and language for your audience. By speaking the language of your audience, you build rapport with them, and this increases trust. If the person you are speaking with values freedom and liberty, then using a quote by George Washington could be persuasive in the sense that you, too, have thought about freedom and liberty. When people have shared values or mutual understanding of concepts, rapport and trust is built.

3) Qualifying arguments can also be a useful tool to build credibility with an audience. Instead of using words like “always” or “everyone,” say things like “the research suggests,” “in my experience,” or “several studies demonstrate.”

Qualifying - or limiting your arguments - makes you look like a nuanced thinker, and thus trustworthy. If you appear one-sided and biased, you look less credible.

4) Another way of demonstrating ethos is by accurately and fairly representing counterarguments. While this can also be a form of logos—since integrating counterarguments shows you are a logical thinker, it also gives you credibility in the sense that you are fair. A fair person is objective and thus more credible.

5) A final way of establishing ethos is by limiting spelling and grammatical mistakes in your writing. These sorts of mistakes cause you to appear less sophisticated and professional, and this can hurt your credibility.



The use of emotions through rhetoric is what Aristotle called pathos. This idea is based on the fact that humans are filled with a variety of emotions. Whether it is sadness, happiness, fear, anger, surprise, or disgust - emotions change how we see the world and how we interpret the actions of others.

For example, pretend someone said,

“Caring for the environment may not change your life, but it will change the lives of your children.”

This statement is attempting to appeal to people’s emotions - specifically their love for their children. Most people want what is best for their kids, and this statement caters to that desire.

Now listen to the following two statements, and guess which one is using pathos.

1) “COVID-19 drove an additional 97 million people into extreme poverty in 2020, according to World Bank estimates.”

2) “The loss of Ana’s family business meant her family had to sell their cows and resort to living on 1 dollar a day. Her six-year old daughter often cries about how hungry she is.”

While the first example relies on ethos and logos, example two is more descriptive about extreme poverty and what it looks like. Example two humanizes the data. The description of a six-year old girl crying from hunger is sobering and sad. It is, therefore, an example of pathos.

Perhaps the most compelling way to elicit emotions in readers and listeners is through storytelling - or anecdotes. Short stories are a great way of motivating and persuading others. For example, If you were trying to persuade a friend to join the football team, you could tell a story about how you, too, were hesitant to join the team. But now that you have been lifting weights, you have become more confident. And now that you are part of a team, you feel more accepted at school.

Personal examples or stories are great persuasive tools for stimulating emotions in listeners.



A speaker or writer's logos appeals to the rationality and logic of her audience. Have you ever had a teacher tell you, "Be sure you back up a claim with evidence and reasoning"? If you have, your teacher wants you to demonstrate logos, or logic.

You see, when you write an argumentative essay that includes a thesis statement, and that thesis is followed by body paragraphs that each argue for that thesis, you are thinking logically. There is a method to your thinking, a pattern, a bringing together of information that aligns and makes sense.

For example, in Barack Obama's 2015 State of the Union address, Obama appeals to his audience's sense of logic by supporting his claim with evidence.

"But tonight, we turn the page. Tonight, after a breakthrough year for America, our economy is growing and creating jobs at the fastest pace since 1999. Our unemployment rate is now lower than it was before the financial crisis. More of our kids are graduating than ever before. More of our people are insured than ever before. And we are as free from the grip of foreign oil as we've been in almost 30 years."

Now Obama's information here could be wrong, dramatized, or biased. But the structure of his ideas - that the economy is growing, unemployment is low, kids are graduating, people are insured, and the US is not as dependent on foreign oil as before - all provide evidence that aligns with Obama's claim that America had a breakthrough year, and continues to do well.

Effective forms of logos include:

Statistics and facts.

(These are effective when providing evidence to support a claim)



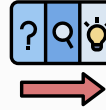
If, then statements

(Provide a linear line of reasoning)



(Inductive and deductive reasoning)

Demonstrates in-depth and methodical thinking.



## Questions

1. Ethos appeals to an audience's \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Out of the following two statements, which one presents a more credible argument? Give an explanation for your answer.

“A 75-year study by Harvard found that relationships have a powerful influence over your health and longevity. “

Or

“After taking six days to contemplate my life, it is clear that relationships have a powerful influence on health.”

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3. Why can speaking with a certain tone and using language your audience is familiar with, help you build credibility and trust?

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4. Why does qualifying your arguments often help you build trust with your audience?

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5. An appeal to an audience's emotions is called \_\_\_\_\_.

6. How is this statement trying to appeal to people's emotions? Explain your answer.

“Caring for the environment may not change your life, but it will change the lives of your children.”

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7. Why do you think anecdotes can be a powerful tool for appealing to people's emotions?

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8. Logos is a rhetorical appeal that appeals to an audience's sense of \_\_\_\_\_.

9. How does Barack Obama appeal to his audience's sense of logic in this paragraph?

"But tonight, we turn the page. Tonight, after a breakthrough year for America, our economy is growing and creating jobs at the fastest pace since 1999. Our unemployment rate is now lower than it was before the financial crisis. More of our kids are graduating than ever before. More of our people are insured than ever before. And we are as free from the grip of foreign oil as we've been in almost 30 years."

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## Answers

1) credibility, trust, character, ethics

2) Statement two is more credible.

The first statement is more credible and trustworthy because it is supported by a long-term study (75 years) from a prestigious university (Harvard).

The second statement is based on only “six days of contemplation.” This is a short period of time compared to a 75-year study. And one person’s “contemplations” is not nearly as credible as a study done by a University.

3) Speaking the language of your audience builds rapport - and this increases trust. We tend to trust people we relate with.

4) Qualifying your arguments makes you appear like a nuanced thinker, and this makes you seem more trustworthy. A person who appears fair seems more credible than a person who is biased.

5) pathos

6) This statement appeals to our love for family - especially our children. The “environment” doesn’t necessarily elicit strong emotions. It is something complex and impersonal for many people. However, if we can connect an idea - such as the environment - with our children’s future, this can provide an emotional response.

7) There is something deeply human and personal about stories. In fact, people typically see their lives through the prism of a story. Stories allow people to connect with others and see themselves as part of something bigger than themselves.

8) logic

9) Obama’s statement follows a logical line of reasoning. Obama makes the claim that America had a breakthrough year. He then supports this claim with evidence that aligns with his claim.

10) Write an argumentative paragraph arguing about anything you want. Just be sure you integrate ethos, pathos, and logos into your paragraph.

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