

Ethos, Pathos, Logos: What to Know

Ethos, pathos, and logos are different methods for persuading an audience—approaches to convincing people to adopt a certain point of view or take a particular action. Ethos, pathos, and logos are called appeals. They are used in speeches, writing, and advertising.

Ethos tries to convince you through the trustworthiness and believability of the author. It is an appeal to ethics.

Writers and speakers who use ethos . . .

- ✓ introduce their expertise.
- ✓ are fair and unbiased.
- ✓ use reliable sources.
- ✓ seem like authorities and come across as people worth listening to.

Pathos tries to persuade you by creating an emotional connection between you and the topic. It is an appeal to your emotions.

Writers and speakers who use pathos . . .

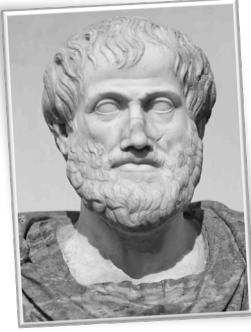
- ✓ use powerful language to evoke sympathy.
- ✓ send a message that touches your values or beliefs.
- ✓ include compelling stories, examples, or visuals that evoke the feelings they want you to feel.

Logos tries to persuade you by using evidence such as facts and figures. It is an appeal to logic and reason.

Writers and speakers who use logos . . .

- ✓ rely on facts and information rather than personal opinions.
- ✓ use data and statistics properly.
- ✓ construct well-reasoned arguments that make sense.
- ✓ present relevant claims and evidence.

INTRODUCTION TO ETHOS, PATHOS & LOGOS



ARISTOTLE was a Greek philosopher who lived in the 4th century BCE. He was an influential thinker and wrote on many subjects – from logic and ethics, to biology and metaphysics.

One area, in which Aristotle was particularly interested, was *rhetoric*. That is, the art of persuasive speaking or writing. He even wrote a whole book entitled 'On Rhetoric' in which he explains his theories of persuasive language and speech. Most significantly, in this work he expounds on the concepts of **ethos**, **logos** and **pathos**, as tools for persuasive language. A lot can be learned about the art of persuasion from these three concepts, and once understood, they can be easily applied to our own persuasive speaking and writing.

ETHOS

Ethos is a Greek word meaning 'character'. In terms of persuasive language, it is **an appeal to authority and credibility**. *Ethos* is a means of convincing an audience of the reliable character or credibility of the speaker/writer, or the credibility of the argument.

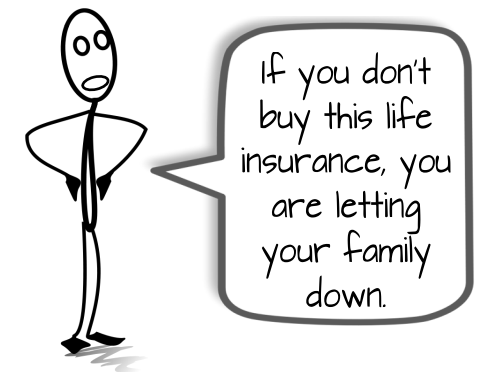
It is an important tool of persuasion because if you can get your audience to see you (or your argument) as credible and trustworthy, it will be much easier to persuade them.



PATHOS

Pathos is a Greek word meaning 'suffering' or 'experience', and it is used in persuasive speech as **an appeal to the emotions** of the audience. *Pathos* is the way of creating a persuasive argument by evoking an emotional response in the audience/reader.

You can use *pathos* when trying to persuade, by appealing to an audience's hopes and dreams, playing on their fears or worries, or appealing to their particular beliefs or ideals.



LOGOS

Logos is a Greek word meaning 'a word' or 'reason'. In rhetoric, it is **an appeal to logic and reason**. It is used to persuade an audience by logical thought, fact and rationality.

Logos can be a useful tool of persuasion because if you can 'prove' an argument through logical and sound reasoning, your audience is more likely to be persuaded.



If you can include a combination of these three elements in your persuasive speaking and writing, you will appeal to your audience's emotions, sense of reasoning and belief in you, and therefore your writing will be more convincing. Try to subtly weave ethos, pathos and logos into your persuasive writing and speaking.