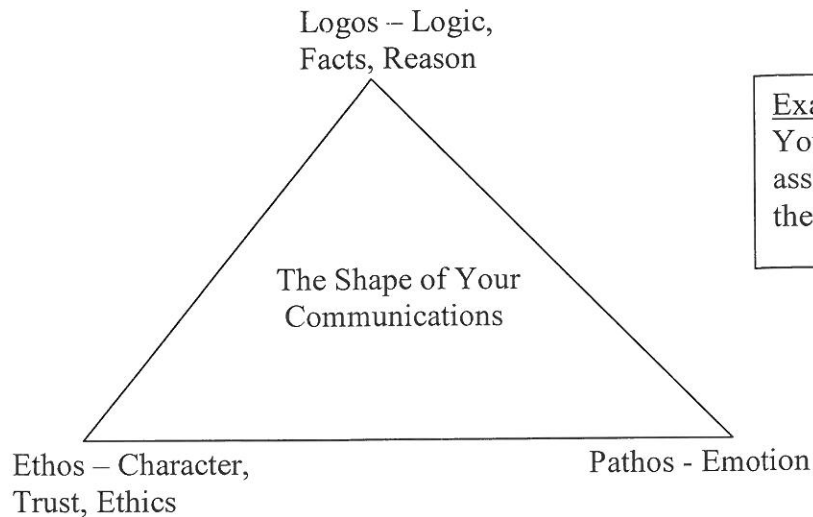


The Three Methods of Persuasion

When you consider all of the various actions that someone can take in order to persuade you of something or that you can take to persuade someone else of something, you will probably find that all of these actions can be classified into one of three major groups, which correspond with the three points of the rhetorical triangle. These three groups were first identified by the ancient Greeks; therefore, they are called by Greek names. Fortunately, we have some English equivalents for them.



Example:

You want an A on your assignment rather than the B you were given.

Logos

The Greek word “logos” means *logic* or *reason*, and it is the root from which our word “logic” came as well as words like *geology* or *biology*. *Logos* corresponds with the topic of the writing, and it is concerned with the *facts* and the way in which they interact. We can use the English word “logic” to identify *logos*. The best question to ask regarding this method of persuasion is “What sense does it make?”

When you tell your teacher that you should receive an ‘A’ on the assignment because you do better work than anyone else, you are using logos.

Ethos

The Greek word “ethos” is the root for our word *ethics*. *Ethos* corresponds with the writer, and it is concerned with the way in which the writer is perceived by the audience. The best words to use as synonyms for *ethos* are probably “character,” or “trust.” The key question to ask when considering ethos is “Do I trust this writer?”

When you carefully practice the words that you will say when you ask the teacher for that ‘A’ on the assignment and you dress particularly well that day, you are using ethos.

Pathos

“Pathos” in Greek, means suffering, but the best word we can substitute is probably “emotion.” “Pathos” is the root for words such as “pathetic,” “pathologist,” and “psychopath.” *Pathos* corresponds with the audience and is concerned with the emotion responses of the audience to the writing. The key question here is “How is the audience moved by this?”

When you tell the teacher how difficult it is for you to get along with your parents when you do not get ‘A’s’ on assignments, then you are using pathos.

****Persuasion, then, is an art that expresses a person’s or institution’s opinion and tries to make its audience agree with the stand taken, change opinion of others, and sometimes take an action.**

****An opinion can be supported with two kinds of detail: appeals to reason and appeals to emotion. To appeal to reason, facts, statistics, expert opinions, and examples validate a particular position. To appeal to emotion, words that generate strong positive or negative responses are used.**

****Opinion will often be designed to appeal to reason, ethics, and emotion all in the same piece of persuasive writing.**

How Persuasive Can You Be?

Directions: Write four separate arguments to your parent/guardians explaining why they should let you borrow the car this weekend. The first argument should use logos. The second argument should use ethos. The third argument should use pathos. The fourth argument, your best, should use logos, ethos, and pathos. Each argument should be about two-three sentences long. Remember to be as convincing as possible.

Argument One-Logos

Argument Two-Ethos

Argument Three-Pathos

Argument Four-Logos, Ethos, and Pathos

Persuasive (aka Propaganda) Techniques and the Rhetorical Triangle

Logos: Appeals to logic and reason

- A logical persuasive argument is built on an opinion supported by reason and evidence
- Reasons tell why everyone should accept an opinion as true.
- Evidence should support, or back up, an author's reasons.
- Examples of evidence
 - **Facts and statistics**--Researched evidence gives credibility to the author's reasons because they are difficult to argue.
 - **Expert testimony** - Statements made by experts in the field are very convincing.
- Logical fallacies are statements that sound logical and factual, but are not.
- Examples of logical fallacies:
 - **Hasty generalization**—Generalizations occur when the author comes to a conclusion on the basis of insufficient evidence.
 - **Name calling**—This occurs when the author attacks the person holding a view, rather than the view itself.
 - **Either/or**—The author describes a situation as having only two choices when there are actually more.
 - **False cause and effect**—The author asserts that because Event B followed Event A, A caused B
 - **Circular reasoning**—The author's argument appears to lead to a conclusion, but merely restates point.

Ethos: Author's character & ethics

- **Expert testimony**—This can fall under both logos and ethos. If the author of a work is an expert in the field, he/she is appealing not only to logic, but he/she is establishing credibility with the audience.

Pathos: Appeals to audience's emotion

- **Loaded words**—Words carefully selected to elicit a response from the audience.
- **Glittering generalities**—A type of loaded words so positive that they 'glitter' and make you feel good—like company slogans.
- **Testimonials**—These are comments by famous person or someone who has used a product or idea to endorse it—not an expert.
- **Bandwagon appeal**—This is the "Don't miss out" or "Don't be the last person to have one" appeal often used by advertisers and authors.
- **Fear tactics**—When a person believes something because he/she is afraid NOT to believe it—either knowing the truth is too scary, or the person is cared by

Persuasive techniques to know:

Facts and statistics
Name calling
Circular reasoning
Testimonials

Expert testimony
Either/or
Loaded words
Bandwagon appeal

Hasty generalization
False cause and effect
Glittering generalities
Fear tactics