



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.

LET'S FOCUS ON *ETHOS*

Ethos is an appeal to ethics; it is a means of convincing the audience of the character or credibility of the persuader.

How can you incorporate ethos?

- You can **openly remind** your audience who you are and why you are an authority on the subject. ('As the leading researcher, I agree...').
- You can establish authority more subtly through the use of **jargon or specialized terms** ('My quantitative research in linguistic anthropology has shown...').
- You can establish credibility by just using correct grammar and language, using **solid reasoning and good arguments** and therefore sounding credible and trustworthy.

EXAMPLES:

- » I have been married for 58 years and I can tell you that he will not be a good husband to you.
- » Having written ten successful novels myself, I can tell you that this book is worth buying.
- » My friend, who has a PhD in nutritional science, says that we should eat fewer carbohydrates.

Why use ethos?

If your audience believe you to be a qualified, authoritative figure, or an expert in a subject, they are more likely to be persuaded by your argument.

TASK ONE: For each of the following, identify whether or not **ETHOS** is used, and explain your reasoning.

	Ethos?	Explain
	Yes	The speaker has referred to their extensive experience in this area, in order to give credit to their opinion. Somebody with over 30 years experience would surely know what he or she is talking about.
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

TASK TWO: For each of the following scenarios, write your own persuasive sentences using **ethos**:

1. You are trying to persuade your mother to let you get a tattoo.

2. You are attempting to convince an audience that animal testing is morally wrong.

3. You are trying to persuade your teacher not to give you homework.

LET'S FOCUS ON PATHOS

How can you incorporate pathos?

- You can use **descriptive language and imagery**, which evokes emotions. ('This life-saving dishwasher will enhance your life and lighten your load.')
- You can **identify** values / emotions which relate particularly to your audience, and play on them. ('I know you care for your family, so...')
- You can use **personal stories** to appeal to the sympathies and emotions of your audience. ('When I lost my job, I knew how important it was to...')

EXAMPLES:

- » If you don't go on this holiday you will regret it. You don't want to live with regrets, do you?
- » You love your dog; so buy this dog food, as it will help him to get all his nutrients.
- » You have been poorly treated. You have been taken advantage of. Now is the time to take action.

Pathos is an appeal to emotion; it is a means of convincing the audience by creating an emotional response.

Why use pathos?

If your audience is emotionally invested and engaged with your cause or argument, they are more likely to be persuaded.

TASK ONE: For each of the following, explain how pathos is used (you must identify the emotional appeal).

	Explain
	"Don't be the last person to get one. You don't want to be the laughing stock of your school!"
1	"If you don't purchase this life insurance, and something happens to you, how will your family survive?"
2	"We have been mistreated, abused and oppressed. They have benefited from our suffering and we must act now!"
3	"We live in a great democracy. So donate now and support the troops who are protecting our freedom."
4	"Just eat and don't complain. Children in Africa are starving and would give anything to have that plate of food."
5	"Caring for the environment may not change your life, but it will change the lives of your children."

TASK TWO: For each of the following scenarios, write your own persuasive sentences using pathos:

1. You are trying to persuade members of your class to volunteer to tutor underprivileged children.

2. You are attempting to convince a friend to join your sports team.

3. You are trying to persuade an audience that they should buy a particular brand of cereal.

LET'S FOCUS ON LOGOS

Logos is an appeal to logic; it is a means of convincing the audience through rational thought and reason.

How can you incorporate logos?

- You can **use research and statistics** to back-up your arguments. ('87% of students benefit from textbooks, so...')
- You can **use logical processes** to explain your point – 'if this... then that...' ('If you don't want gum disease, then you should brush regularly.')
- You must **give convincing, solid evidence** and reasons to support your claims. ('I need a car: it would make me more independent; save me money; improve my life.')

EXAMPLES:

- » I've not eaten meat for 8 years, and I'm fit and healthy; you can't argue that vegetarianism is always unhealthy.
- » We have conducted the experiment 57 times and we get the same results every single time.
- » That is not my wallet. My wallet has a tear in it. This wallet has no tear in it. Therefore, it cannot be mine.

Why use logos? If you can present a logical, rational argument to your audience, which engages their intellect and sense of reason, they are more likely to be persuaded.

TASK ONE: For each of the following, explain whether or not you think that logos is being used effectively.

		Effective? Yes	Effective? No	Explain
	"I need new jeans. Everyone in my class has new jeans."		✓	This isn't an effective use of logos as the reasoning is not logical and convincing. Firstly, it's highly unlikely that everyone has new jeans (hyperbole). Secondly, just because other people have new jeans, it doesn't logically follow that the speaker <i>needs</i> them.
1	"All men and women will die. You are a man. Therefore, you will die one day."			
2	"Everyone has children. Therefore, everyone needs to think about the schooling of his or her children."			
3	"You don't need to jump in front of a train to know it's a bad idea; so why do you need to try drugs to know if they're damaging?"			
4	"Cigarette smoke contains over 4,800 chemicals, 69 of which are known to cause cancer. So why start smoking?"			
5	"Every morning the rooster crows, then the sun rises. Therefore the rooster causes the sun to rise."			

TASK TWO: For each of the following scenarios, write your own persuasive sentences using logos:

1. You are trying to persuade your brother to stop eating chocolate.

2. You are attempting to convince your class that they shouldn't drink and drive.

3. You are trying to persuade an audience that they should exercise more often.

USING **ETHOS, PATHOS & LOGOS**

For each of the following situations, write your own persuasive sentence(s) using *ethos*, *pathos* or *logos*. You may even use more than one technique per sentence, but you must use all of them at least once at some point in the exercise. You must also identify which one(s) you have tried to implement. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Example. You are trying to sell a particular brand of toothpaste, called 'ShinyWhite'.

3 out of 4 people surveyed said that they prefer our brand to any other. If you care about your teeth, make the wise choice and buy ShinyWhite before it's too late.

Technique(s) used: *Pathos and Logos*

1. The principal has cancelled the prom. You are trying to persuade him/her to reconsider his/her decision.

Technique(s) used: _____

2. You are attempting to convince your parents to buy you a pet rabbit.

Technique(s) used: _____

3. You are trying to persuade your aunt to set up a Facebook account.

Technique(s) used: _____

4. Your sister is on a strict diet, but you are trying to persuade her to try one of your freshly baked cookies.

Technique(s) used: _____

5. It is a rainy day; you are trying to persuade your friend to go for a run with you.

Technique(s) used: _____

6. Your mother wants you to go grocery shopping with her and you are trying to persuade her that it's not a good idea.

Technique(s) used: _____

7. Your teacher wants you to handwrite your essay but you want to type it; try to persuade him/her to let you type it.

Technique(s) used: _____

8. You are trying to convince your classmates to each donate \$5 to a charity which rescues abandoned animals.

Technique(s) used: _____

IDENTIFYING **ETHOS, PATHOS & LOGOS**

in advertising

For each of the following extracts from advertisements, identify how *ethos*, *pathos* or *logos* is being used.

1 **All True Make-Up:**
Because You Deserve The Best

2 **MACARONNI CHEESE**
Just the way mom makes it

3 **Butterlys' Knives:**
The Professional Choice

4 **4 OUT OF 5 PEOPLE
CHOOSE VITALISE FOR
EFFECTIVE PAIN RELIEF**

5 **Dynamite
Security**
WE KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE

6 **SHINEYWHITE MOUTHWASH**
Recommended by dentists

7 If you want value for money, then buy
**KING'S ALLSOFT
TOILET PAPER**