

The Three Ways to Persuade

More than 2,000 years ago, a Greek philosopher named **Aristotle** said that every persuasive speech uses three basic tools: **ethos**, **logos**, and **pathos**. These three words are still used today by speakers, advertisers, and business leaders. Let's look at each one.

1. Ethos — Trust the Speaker

Ethos means **credibility** — how much the audience trusts and respects the speaker. A speaker builds ethos in three ways:

- **Being competent:** They clearly know their topic. Good research and a well-organized speech make a speaker look like an expert.
- **Being trustworthy:** They tell the truth, don't try to trick the audience, and treat both sides of an argument fairly.
- **Being dynamic:** They speak with energy, confidence, and enthusiasm. Eye contact and a strong voice help a lot here.

Simple example: A doctor talking about health, or a company founder explaining their own product, already has some ethos before they even start speaking — because of *who they are*.

Keyword: credibility, trust, expertise

2. Logos — Trust the Facts

Logos means using **logic and reasoning**. A speaker appeals to logos by:

- Giving facts, statistics, and real examples.
- Explaining ideas step by step, so conclusions make sense.
- Using reliable sources (studies, experts, data).
- Addressing the *other side* of the argument and explaining why it's weaker — research shows this is actually **more** persuasive than only presenting one side.

Simple example: "This new type of solar panel reduces electricity costs by 30%, according to three independent studies."

Keyword: facts, statistics, logic, evidence

3. Pathos — Trust the Feeling

Pathos means appealing to **emotion**. A speaker uses pathos by:

- Using vivid, descriptive language that helps the audience *picture* something.
- Telling a personal story (their own, or someone else's).
- Using comparisons (metaphors, similes) and repetition.
- Using powerful images or video.

Simple example: "Imagine a child walking two hours every day just to find clean water." This sentence doesn't give a statistic — it makes you *feel* something.

Keyword: emotion, story, imagery

While/After You Read: Comprehension Activity

A. Match the keyword to the technique

Keyword	Technique
1. "According to three studies..."	a. Ethos
2. "As a nurse with 15 years of experience..."	b. Logos
3. "Picture a family losing their home overnight..."	c. Pathos

B. True or False?

1. Ethos is only about being famous. ()
2. Logos includes addressing the opposing argument, not just giving your own facts. ()
3. Pathos should be the **ONLY** technique in a strong speech. ()
4. A good speech usually combines all three techniques. ()

C. Find Your Keyword

In pairs: one of you focuses on **ethos**, the other on **logos** or **pathos**. Explain your technique to your partner **in your own words**, using the keyword box above — no reading directly from the text.

Source

Adapted and simplified for B1 learners from: Anonymous. (n.d.). *10.2: Persuasive speech strategies*. Social Sci LibreTexts.

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