

Identifying Rhetorical Strategies: Logos, Pathos, and Ethos

Rhetoric: The art of using language persuasively and effectively

Logos = Logic

The use of logic, rationality, and critical reasoning to persuade. Logos appeals to the mind. Logos seeks to persuade the reader intellectually.

Some Examples of Logos

- Appeal to the mind/intellect
- Draw from philosophy and logic
- Facts
- Statistics
- If, then... statements
- Definitions of terms
- Explanation of ideas
- Cause and effect
- Details that come from objective reporting
- Logical reasons and explanations
- Counterargument and rebuttal

Pathos = Emotion

The use of emotion and affect to persuade. Pathos appeals to the heart and to one's emotions. Pathos seeks to persuade the reader emotionally.

Some Examples of Pathos

- Appeal to the heart/emotion
- Draw from spirituality or religious traditions
- Stories or testimonials
- Personal anecdotes or stories
- Personal connections
- Imagery and figurative language that provokes an emotional response
- Visual images or words that inspire you to empathize or have compassion towards the idea/topic
- Powerful words, phrases, or images that stir up emotion
- Details that come from subjective reporting

Ethos = Ethics and Credibility

The ongoing establishment of a writer's or speaker's authority, credibility, and believability as he/she speaks or writes. Ethos appeals to ethics and character. Ethos seeks to persuade the reader that the writer/speaker can be trusted and believed due to his/her noble character or ethical ways in which he/she is presenting ideas.

Some Examples of Ethos

- Appeal to the writer's/speaker's believability, qualifications, character; relevant biographical information
- Use of credible sources (experts, scholars)
- Accurate citation of sources: gives credit where credit is due
- Experience and authority: person knows the issues and has experience in the field
- Appropriate language: uses language of the discipline
- Appropriate tone: knows the audience and context of situation
- Humility: is not arrogant
- Uses tentative yet authoritative language; avoids sweeping statements like "Everyone is doing this," "This is the *only* way," "This will *always* work." Instead says, "The research *suggests* that," "Some experts believe," "In *my experience*," etc.