

Rhetorical Appeals: Logos, Ethos, and Pathos

Whenever you read an argument you must ask yourself, “Is this persuasive? If so, why? And to whom?” There are many ways to appeal to an audience. Among them are appealing to logos, ethos, and pathos. These appeals are identifiable in almost all arguments.

To Appeal to LOGOS (logic, reasoning) : the argument itself, the reasoning the author uses; logical evidence	<i>To Develop or Appeal to ETHOS (character, ethics)</i> : how an author builds credibility and trustworthiness	To Appeal to PATHOS (emotion) : words or passages an author uses to activate emotions
Types of LOGOS Appeals • Theories/scientific facts • Indicated meanings or reasons (because...) • Historical analogies • Definitions • Factual data & statistics • Quotations • Informed opinions • Examples (real life examples) • Personal anecdotes • Line of reasoning	<i>Ways to develop ETHOS</i> • Author’s profession/background • Author’s publication • Appearing sincere, fair minded, knowledgeable • Conceding to opposition where appropriate • Citations from experts & authorities • Morally/ethically likable • Appropriate language for audience and subject • Appropriate vocabulary • Correct grammar • Professional format	Types of PATHOS Appeals • Emotionally loaded language • Vivid descriptions • Emotional examples • Anecdotes, testimonies, or narratives about emotional experiences or events • Figurative language • Emotional tone (humor, sarcasm, disappointment, excitement, etc.)
Effect on Audience Evokes a cognitive, rational response. Readers get a sense of, “Oh, that makes sense,” or “Hmm, that doesn’t really prove anything.”	<i>Effect on Audience</i> Helps readers to see the author as reliable, trustworthy, competent, and credible. The reader might respect the author or his/her views.	Effect on Audience Evokes an emotional response. Persuasion by emotion (usually evoking fear, sympathy, empathy, and/or anger)
How to Talk About It <i>The author appeals to logos by defining relevant terms and then supporting his claim with numerous citations from authorities.</i> <i>Statistics and expert testimony are convincing logical appeals in this essay.</i>	<i>How to Talk About It</i> <i>Through his use of scientific diction, the author builds his ethos by demonstrating expertise.</i> <i>The author develops her ethos by demonstrating to readers that she is sympathetic to the struggles minorities face.</i>	How to Talk About It <i>When referencing 9/11, the author is appealing to pathos. Here, he is eliciting both sadness and anger from his readers.</i> <i>The author’s descriptions of the child with cancer was a very persuasive emotional appeal.</i>

Fallacies are common errors in reasoning that will undermine the logic of your argument. Fallacies can be either illegitimate arguments or irrelevant points, and are often identified because they lack evidence that supports their claim. Avoid these common fallacies in our own arguments and watch for them in the arguments of others.