

Persuasion: Pathos vs. Logos vs. Ethos

Pathos, logos, and ethos are methods used by writers or speakers to present arguments to an audience. These forms of persuasion originated with Aristotle and can be generally defined as follows.

Pathos – Persuasion

- Pathos (emotion) attempts to convince an audience by creating an emotional response. Argument may be expressed in first person (“I”).
- Words should evoke feelings such as love, sympathy, fear, etc.

Logos – Logic

- Logos (logic) attempts to persuade an audience with reason, using facts and figures. Logos is appeal based on logic or reason.
- Facts should support argument with statistics and/or evidence.

Ethos – Ethics

- **Ethos** (ethics) attempts to convince an audience by citing authorities or experts. Support should come from a cited authority on a particular topic.
- An ethos-driven speech or essay might also rely upon the reputation of the author (first-person authority).

Examples

Pathos – Evokes feelings of pity, fear, joy, sadness, pride, etc.

- If you don't support gun control, you could become the next victim.
- That corporation has irreparably harmed this community. It continues to expand and destroy our once pristine environment. Its executives don't care who gets hurt in the process. The company's expansion won't stop until our forests have all been cut down and paved over.
- “Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends. And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.”
— Martin Luther King, Jr.

Logos – Cites facts, data, or statistics

- The data is clear: texting while driving is dangerous. A study by the Federal Highway Commission indicates that 40 percent of all accidents on interstate highways are a result of people texting while driving.
- Research compiled by FBI analysts, as well as other law enforcement agencies, reveals that the fight against terrorism requires international support. Inter-agency cooperation resulted in more than 2,000 arrests last year.

Ethos - Establishes credibility

- As an experienced Marine Corps officer, I can tell you that no amount of basic training prepares a person for actual warfare.
- Dr. Bradley Gill, an experienced veterinarian and author of a college textbook, *Canine Health*, says all dogs require annual vaccinations.