

Rhetorical Devices: Three Ways to Persuade

Ethos: The Writer's Character or Image *"I am a believable person, therefore believe me."*

*The Greek word ethos is related to our word *ethics or ethical*. Refers to the speaker's character as it appears to the audience. . If we believe that a speaker has "good sense, good moral character, and goodwill," we are inclined to believe what that speaker says to us. You can create ethos in several ways:

- Correctness and clear writing convey the intelligence of the author.
- Use of research and information shows the author's knowledge of the subject.
- What we call "writer's voice", which simply means the person and personality we hear while reading, is also a large part of this.

Pathos: The Emotions of the Audience

* Emotions are conveyed a number of ways in essays. The best ways to appeal to emotions are to:

- Use specific, vividly described examples

Consider the following 2 examples: "Last year, 20 thousand people lost their lives to AIDS." VS. "The young woman's emaciated face shows the ravages of AIDS. Though only 28, her thin, wrinkled skin looks like that of an elderly woman." Which one appeals to the emotions of the audience more?

- Make your word choices with an awareness of the emotional connotations of words.

Word choice is VERY important: Think about your emotional reaction to "The Bush Administration" vs. "The Bush Regime" (they essentially have very similar meanings)

* Appeals to the emotions and passions are very common in our society. Many advertisements for consumer goods aim at making us insecure about our attractiveness or social acceptability, and then offer a remedy for this feeling in the form of a product.

Logos: Logical Arguments

*Logos means providing factually accurate and logically meaningful reasons in support of your positions. If ethos and pathos are ways of moving an audience to believe an argument, logos is the argument itself, the progression of ideas that leads to your conclusion. Strong arguments offer:

- Specific reasons for more general claims.
- SUPPORT YOUR CLAIMS. *When you claim that something is true, let your readers know why or how you know it is true.*

Conclusion: The strongest essays make use of all *three modes of persuasion*, ethos, pathos, and logos. A good essay presents its author as a caring, intelligent, and well-informed person, someone to be believed. **(ethos)** Strong essays also move the emotions of their readers, using specific human examples and carefully chosen language to engage their readers' feelings. **(pathos)** But most importantly, good arguments develop a careful structure of thought based in valid logic and real-life experience. **(logos)** The best arguments, of course, are those that are true. Your job as a writer is to make that truth obvious and undeniable to your audience.

