

I'm not a robot

























relying on pathos is often a smart and effective strategy for persuading an audience. Both positive and negative emotions can heavily influence an audience: for example, an audience who wants to persuade a speaker whose position will make them happy, a speaker who wants to end their sadness, or a speaker who is opposed to something that makes them angry. Here is a simple example of pathos: "Every day, the rainforests shrink and innocent animals are killed. We must do something about this calamitous trend before the planet we call our home is damaged beyond repair." Here, the author is trying to win over an audience by making them feel sad, concerned, or afraid. The author's choice of words like "innocent" and "calamitous" enforce the fact that they are trying to rely on pathos. What is logos? In Greek, the word logos literally translates to "word, reason, or discourse." The word logos is related to many different words that have to do with reason, discourse, or knowledge, such as logic, logical, and any words that end in the suffixes -logy or -logue. As a mode of persuasion and rhetorical appeal, logos is often referred to as "the appeal to reason." If a speaker or author is relying on logos, they are typically reciting facts or providing data and statistics that support their argument. In a manner of speaking, logos does away with all of the bells and whistles of ethos and pathos and cuts to the chase by trying to present a rational argument. Logos can be effective in arguments because, in theory, it is impossible to argue against truth and facts. An audience is more likely to agree with a speaker who can provide strong, factual evidence that shows their position is correct. On the flip side, an audience is less likely to support an argument that is flawed or entirely wrong. Going further, a speaker that presents a lot of supporting evidence and data to the audience is likely to come across as knowledgeable and someone to be listened to, which earns bonus points in ethos as well. While Aristotle clearly valued an argument based on reason very highly, we know that logos alone doesn't always effectively persuade an audience. In your own life, you have likely seen a rational, correct speaker lose an argument to a charismatic, authoritative speaker who may not have the facts right. Here is a simple example of logos: "According to market research, sales of computer chips have increased by 300% in the last five years. Analysis of the industry tells us that the market share of computer chips is dominated by Asian manufacturers. It is clear that the Asian technology sector will continue to experience rapid growth for the foreseeable future." In this paragraph, the author is using data, statistics, and logical reasoning to make their argument. They clearly hope to use logos to try to convince an audience to agree with them. Do you need persuading to take this quiz on identifying ethos, pathos, and logos? We think you'll be a champion at it. Examples of ethos, pathos, and logos Ethos, pathos, and logos can all be employed to deliver compelling and persuasive arguments or to win over an audience. Let's look at a variety of examples to see how different speakers and authors have turned to these modes of persuasion over the years. ethos "Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral. He was my friend, faithful and just to me [...] You all did see that on the Lupercal I thrice presented him a kingly crown, Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?" —Marc Antony, Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare In this scene, Marc Antony is trying to win over the Roman people, so Shakespeare has Antony rely on ethos. Antony is establishing himself as both a person of authority in Rome (having the power to offer Caesar a crown) and an expert on Caesar's true character (Antony was Caesar's close friend and advisor). "During the next five years, I started a company named NeXT, another company named Pixar, and fell in love with an amazing woman who would become my wife. Pixar went on to create the world's first computer animated feature film, Toy Story, and is now the most successful animation studio in the world. In a remarkable turn of events, Apple bought NeXT. I returned to Apple, and the technology we developed at NeXT is at the heart of Apple's current renaissance." —Steve Jobs, 2005 Here, Steve Jobs is providing his background-via humblebrag- of being a major figure in several different highly successful tech companies. Jobs is using ethos to provide substance to his words and make it clear to the audience that he knows what he is talking about and they should listen to him. "Moreover, though you hate both him and his gifts with all your heart, yet pity the rest of the Achaeans who are being harassed in all their host; they will honour you as a god, and you will earn great glory at their hands. You might even kill Hector; he will come within your reach, for he is infatuated, and declares that not a Danaan whom the ships have brought can hold his own against him." —Ulysses to Achilles, The Iliad by Homer In this plea, Ulysses is doing his best to pile on the pathos. In one paragraph, Ulysses is attempting to appeal to several of Achilles's emotions: his hatred of Hector, his infamous stubborn pride, his sympathy for civilians, and his desire for vengeance. "I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest—quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality." —Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 1963 In this excerpt from his "I Have A Dream" speech, King is using pathos to accomplish two goals at once. First, he is connecting with his audience by making it clear is aware of their plight and suffering. Second, he is citing these examples to cause sadness or outrage in the audience. Both of these effects will make an audience interested in what he has to say and more likely to support his position. Dr. King's "I Have A Dream" speech is recognizable and noteworthy for many reasons, including the rhetorical device he employs. Learn about it here. logos "Let it be remembered how powerful the influence of a single introduced tree or mammal has been shown to be. But in the case of an island, or of a country partly surrounded by barriers, into which new and better adapted forms could not freely enter, we should then have places in the economy of nature which would assuredly be better filled up if some of the original inhabitants were in some manner modified; for, had the area been open to immigration, these same places would have been seized on by intruders. In such case, every slight modification, which in the course of ages chanced to arise, and which in any way favoured the individuals of any of the species, by better adapting them to their altered conditions, would tend to be preserved; and natural selection would have free scope for the work of improvement." —Charles Darwin, On the Origin of the Species, 1859 In this passage, Darwin is using logos by presenting a rational argument in support of natural selection. Darwin connects natural selection to established scientific knowledge to argue that it makes logical sense that animals would adapt to better survive in their environment. "I often echo the point made by the climate scientist James Hansen: The accumulation of carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gases—some of which will envelop the planet for hundreds and possibly thousands of years—is now trapping as much extra energy daily as 500,000 Hiroshima-class atomic bombs would release every 24 hours. This is the crisis we face." —Al Gore, "The Climate Crisis Is the Battle of Our Time, and We Can Win," 2019 In this call to action, Al Gore uses logos to attempt to convince his audience of the significance of climate change. In order to do this, Gore both cites an expert in the field and provides a scientifically accurate simile to explain the scale of the effect that greenhouse gases have on Earth's atmosphere. What are mythos and kairos? Some modern scholars may also use terms mythos and kairos when discussing modes of persuasion or rhetoric in general. Aristotle used the term mythos to refer to the plot or story structure of Greek tragedies, i.e., how a playwright ordered the events of the story to affect the audience. Today, mythos is most often discussed as a literary or poetic term rather than a rhetorical one. However, mythos may rarely be referred to as the "appeal to culture" or the "appeal to myth" if it is treated as an additional mode of persuasion. According to this viewpoint, a speaker/writer is using mythos if they try to persuade an audience using shared cultural customs or societal values. A commonly cited example of mythos is King's "I Have a Dream" speech quoted earlier. King says: "When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men—yes, black men as well as white men—would be guaranteed the 'unalienable rights' of 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'" Throughout the speech, King repeatedly uses American symbols and American history (mythos) to argue that all Americans should be outraged that Black Americans have been denied freedom and civil rights. Some modern scholars may also consider kairos as an additional mode of persuasion. Kairos is usually defined as referring to the specific time and place that a speaker chooses to deliver their speech. For written rhetoric, the "place" instead refers to the specific medium or publication in which a piece of writing appears. Unlike the other modes of persuasion, kairos relates to the context of a speech and how the appropriateness (or not) of a setting affects how effective a speaker is. Once again, King's "I Have a Dream" speech is a great example of the use of kairos. This speech was delivered at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial during the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation at the end of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Clearly, King intended to use kairos to enhance the importance and timeliness of this landmark speech.