



Brief Explanation and Guidelines for Appeals in Argumentation

Since Aristotle wrote his *Rhetoric* in the 4th century BCE, people have been using his ideas to develop persuasive argument. Here is a brief summary of the three appeals (modes of persuasion) described in his writings, as well as a brief explanation of how you can use them in your own writing and speaking. The employment of these appeals will depend on the audience and rhetorical situation, but a truly effective argument will include all three of these.

Ethos: credibility and ethics of the writer/speaker. Does the audience view you as a reliable source?

Example: “I’m Peyton Manning, and these NIKE shoes are the best shoes I’ve ever worn. They’ve improved my game, and they’ll improve yours too.”

The audience is more likely to buy the shoes because they view Peyton as a reliable and expert source in the subject of athletics.

How it’s used in a paper: tone and style of message and through the way the writer/speaker refers to differing views.

- Language appropriate to audience and subject
- Sincere, fair-minded presentation
- Expert testimony and reliable resources
- Appropriate level of vocabulary and correct grammar

Pathos: emotional or motivational appeals. Is the audience emotionally affected by the presentation?

Example: “This little boy hasn’t had a proper meal in weeks because his family can’t afford to feed him and his twelve siblings. Call this number to help the thousands of people dying from hunger, like this child.”

The audience is persuaded because they are moved by the situation described.

How it’s used in a paper: vivid language and emotional language and numerous sensory details.

- Emotionally loaded language and connotative meanings
- Emotional examples and vivid descriptions
- Narratives of emotional events
- Emotional tone and figurative language

Logos: appeal to logic, intellect, and rationality. Can the audience see the logical connection between your claim and support?

Example: “Revlon Age Defying Makeup is proven to work; when tested, it has been shown to reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles by 80% after six weeks of use.”

The audience is more likely to purchase the product because the effectiveness of the product is supported by objective statistics.

How it’s used in a paper: clear claim, logical reason, and effective support (facts and statistics)

- Theoretical, abstract language
- Definitions and Denotative meanings
- Literal and historical analogies
- Factual data and statistics
- Quotations