

# Analyzing Rhetorical Arguments

You've most likely heard of logos, ethos, pathos, and kairos: four types of persuasive appeals that target different aspects of readers' minds when writers attempt to convince them of an argument. In a rhetorical analysis paper, you will look at an argument and figure out which persuasive appeals have been utilized, as well as how effective the writer uses the appeals. Understanding persuasive appeals and how they function in rhetorical situations can also be very useful when it comes to writing your own persuasive and argumentative essays.

## Logos

The Greek for "word" or "reason," *logos* often refers to the **logic** of an argument. Logos uses evidence, data, and facts to push a conclusion.

- **Because A equals B, and B equals C, A equals C.**
- **Over 100 peer-reviewed studies** conclude that regularly wearing sunscreen can cut one's chances of developing skin cancer in half.
- **History** has proven time and time again that Plato's philosophies are the best to follow in government.

## Ethos

*Ethos* ("character") uses personal credibility to build or dismantle an argument. It can also appeal to ethics and morals.

- **As a cardiologist**, I can confidently say that these methods are accurate.
- **Animal testing is clearly morally wrong** because animals are sentient beings who experience feelings and pain.
- This source's solution should not be strongly considered, **due to the author only having six months of experience in the field.**

## Pathos

*Pathos* is Greek for "experience," and appeals to a reader's emotions, attempting to elicit responses that include compassion, pity, and/or sympathy.

- **Because of the suffering that is experienced** by these people due to the lack of potable water, FEMA must take immediate action.
- Major depressive disorder can be damaging to both the individual and their family and friends. **Both sides may experience loneliness, or profound feelings of loss.**
- **If the schools in this district truly care about their childrens' safety**, they will consider implementing the following anti-cyberbullying awareness program.

## Kairos

A lesser-known rhetorical appeal is *kairos*, Greek for "time." Kairos looks to the timeliness of something to push its argument.

- **This ad would have been better received ten years ago**, when the humor style was more popular.
- **Now is the time to act**; any further delay may result in increased negative effects.

