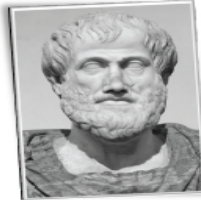


INTRODUCTION TO ETHOS, PATHOS & LOGOS



ARISTOTLE was a Greek philosopher who lived in the 4th century BCE. He was an influential thinker and wrote on many subjects – from logic and ethics, to biology and metaphysics.

One area, in which Aristotle was particularly interested, was *rhetoric*. That is, the art of persuasive speaking or writing. He even wrote a whole book entitled 'On Rhetoric' in which he explains his theories of persuasive language and speech. Most significantly, in this work he expounds on the concepts of **ethos**, **logos** and **pathos**, as tools for persuasive language. A lot can be learned about the art of persuasion from these three concepts, and once understood, they can be easily applied to our own persuasive speaking and writing.

ETHOS

Ethos is a Greek word meaning 'character'. In terms of persuasive language, it is **an appeal to authority and credibility**. *Ethos* is a means of convincing an audience of the reliable character or credibility of the speaker/writer, or the credibility of the argument.

It is an important tool of persuasion because if you can get your audience to see you (or your argument) as credible and trustworthy, it will be much easier to persuade them.

A stick figure dressed as a doctor, wearing a white coat and a stethoscope, pointing towards a speech bubble.

As a doctor, I can say that this product will certainly improve your health.

PATHOS

Pathos is a Greek word meaning 'suffering' or 'experience', and it is used in persuasive speech as **an appeal to the emotions** of the audience. *Pathos* is the way of creating a persuasive argument by evoking an emotional response in the audience/reader.

You can use *pathos* when trying to persuade, by appealing to an audience's hopes and dreams, playing on their fears or worries, or appealing to their particular beliefs or ideals.


A stick figure with a neutral expression, standing with hands at its sides.

If you don't buy this life insurance, you are letting your family down.

LOGOS

Logos is a Greek word meaning 'a word' or 'reason'. In rhetoric, it is **an appeal to logic and reason**. It is used to persuade an audience by logical thought, fact and rationality.

Logos can be a useful tool of persuasion because if you can 'prove' an argument through logical and sound reasoning, your audience is more likely to be persuaded.

A stick figure with its arms raised in a gesture of emphasis or conviction.

It's a fact that smoking causes cancer. Therefore, if you don't want cancer, you shouldn't smoke.

If you can include a combination of these three elements in your persuasive speaking and writing, you will appeal to your audience's emotions, sense of reasoning and belief in you, and therefore your writing will be more convincing. Try to subtly weave ethos, pathos and logos into your persuasive writing and speaking.