



# Rhetorical Appeals

*Rhetoric is the art of persuasion. It has a role to play in every major, every paper, every conversation. Whether we want our story to be entertaining, our scientific study to be respectable, or our résumé to be eye-catching, we are always trying to persuade someone.*

## What are the rhetorical appeals?

While rhetoric is very complex and can be broken up into many disciplines (rhetoric of medicine, rhetoric of nature, rhetoric of fiction, etc.), rhetoric is built on four foundational building blocks: *logos*, *ethos*, *pathos*, and *kairos*.

### **LOGOS**

Greek for “word; discourse; reason,” it refers to appeals to logic.

### **ETHOS**

Greek for “character,” it refers to appeals to credibility.

### **PATHOS**

Greek for “suffering; strong emotion,” it refers to appeals to emotion.

### **KAIROS**

Greek for “right/critical moment,” it refers to appeals to exigency (contextual urgency).

## Examples

<b><i>LOGOS</i></b>	<b><i>ETHOS</i></b>	<b><i>PATHOS</i></b>	<b><i>KAIROS</i></b>
Greek for “word; discourse; reason,” it refers to appeals to logic.	Greek for “character,” it refers to appeals to credibility.	Greek for “suffering; strong emotion,” it refers to appeals to emotion.	Greek for “right/critical moment,” it refers to appeals to exigency.
<p><i>Logos</i> persuades with logical arguments and figures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scientific and statistical data, graphs, and tables</li> <li>• Clear and consistent writing</li> <li>• Well-structured counterarguments</li> <li>• Avoiding logical fallacies</li> </ul> <p>When your writing employs data that supports your argument and connects points together clearly, you are appealing to a reader’s logic.</p>	<p><i>Ethos</i> persuades with the credibility of the author and sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your credibility as an expert or researcher</li> <li>• Credibility of your sources</li> <li>• Sources aggregating with you</li> <li>• Honesty and confidence</li> <li>• Correct grammar</li> </ul> <p>When your writing uses credibility and confidence to create trust, you are appealing to a reader’s sense of character.</p>	<p><i>Pathos</i> persuades with emotions and human sympathy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural values and beliefs</li> <li>• Pity and sorrow</li> <li>• Joy and love</li> <li>• Humor</li> <li>• Anecdotes (stories)</li> <li>• Specific and meaningful words</li> <li>• Detailing affects on the reader and others</li> </ul> <p>When your writing taps into beliefs and sympathies, you are appealing to a reader’s emotions.</p>	<p><i>Kairos</i> persuades with time and context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeliness of an issue</li> <li>• History</li> <li>• Current problems and debates</li> <li>• Severity of an issue</li> <li>• Need for immediate response</li> </ul> <p>When your writing focuses on the urgency and context of an important issue, you are appealing to a reader’s sense of exigency.</p>

**Important Note:** Rather than separated, these four appeals are often working together to create the strongest argument possible.