

# Ethos, Pathos and Logos

## Persuasive Techniques Handouts

with illustrations, explanations and sample paragraphs from famous speeches



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# Ethos



Ethos is the Greek word for “character.” In order to convince people to agree with you, you need to establish that you are worth listening to. If your audience thinks you are trustworthy, knowledgeable, likeable, and respectable, they will tend to believe what you are saying. The impression you make on the reader is just as important as the information you present.

Example:

*“Let tyrants fear. I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good-will of my subjects. And therefore I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation or disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live and die amongst you all. “*

- Queen Elizabeth I (1588) from a speech meant to encourage her troops to fight against an invasion by the Spanish Armada

# Pathos



Pathos means appealing to the audience's emotions. If you can inspire an emotional connection with your audience, get them to feel what you feel, such as anger or pity, or get them to feel sympathetic to your cause, they are more likely to agree with your position.

Example:

*“Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace-- but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!”*

- Patrick Henry (1775) from speech delivered to Second Virginia Convention

# Logos



Logos means to persuade an audience by logic. This is where you present facts, evidence and reason to convince your audience. Citing authorities and showing that your argument is well-researched can lend your argument credibility.

Example:

*“Yesterday, December 7th, 1941 -- a date which will live in infamy -- the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan. The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its government and its emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific...Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves.”*

- Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1941) from “Pearl Harbor Address to the Nation”

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