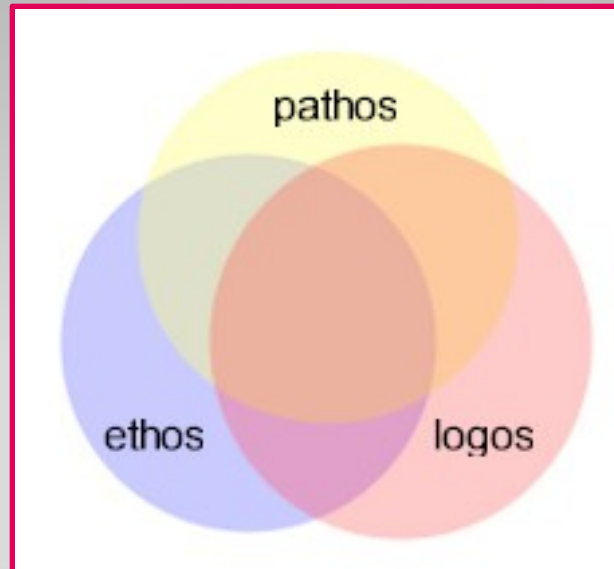


# Dissecting Written and Visual Arguments: Understanding the Rhetorical Appeals



# Rhetorical Appeals in Writing

- The Rhetorical Appeals originate from theories of persuasion by the Greek Philosopher Aristotle, who was alive over 2,300 years ago around 300 B.C.
- Rhetorical Appeals are useful in analyzing another's argument (or building a strong argument yourself)
- Aristotle claimed that the strongest means of persuasion could be divided into three categories: ethos, logos, and pathos.
- Let's look now at each of the rhetorical appeals individually to gain a strong understanding of each category's significance.

# Ethos

- Ethos is an appeal to the credibility and character of the author. If we think critically about this, the issue of trusting the author makes sense because we tend to only believe arguments that come from a reliable source.
- Also, we need to *like* the author. When you have an aversion to a person/institution attempting to persuade you, it is close to impossible to trust that person/institution if you just plain don't like them.
- If we do not trust or respect the source, we won't be persuaded. However, if we respect and trust the author, the argument will automatically be strong and more believable to us.

# More on Ethos

Some examples of ethos:

1. As a former high school principal of 36 years, I can attest to the importance of retaining good teachers rather than seeking out a younger generation of teachers and paying them less.
2. I have coached six NFL teams that have gone on to win the Super Bowl, and I believe the key to success comes more from motivation than skill.
3. As a company that gives 50% of its profits to charity, we are more interested in supporting our community than making a profit and that's why you should trust us and support our products.

# Logos

- Logos is the use of logic, reasoning, and factual evidence to convince the reader of the argument's validity
- We tend to believe anything if it involves factual information; we see this in our judicial system with DNA evidence, or we often take polls and surveys very seriously because they serve as tangible data
- When you see numbers, percentages, statistics, and testimonials, then logos is at work

# More on Logos

- Examples of logos:
  1. JamJam Juices are loaded with essential vitamins A and C, which are important to strengthen and maintain our immune system
  2. A poll of 850 new mothers found that 96% believe that cotton clothing should be the only fabric for a baby's first three months
  3. Although spanking a child is frowned upon by many, 4 out of 5 parents admit to using spanking to discipline their children

# Pathos

- Pathos is the appeal to the reader's emotions
- While some uses of pathos might provoke skepticism from some readers, it is often considered the strongest appeal because of its manner of tugging at our heartstrings
- The appeal of pathos could be used to incite any emotion in the reader: fear, sadness, envy, happiness, humor, compassion, pity, etc.
- When you find yourself reacting with your heart (or gut) rather than your head, then the appeal of pathos is likely at work in an argument

# More on Pathos

- Examples of Pathos:

1. The problem of homelessness in Seattle is very real: When you go to the city, how many times have you seen a young person in tattered clothes and with a hopeless look in their eyes as they beg you for money?
2. I encourage you to sign up for this excellent promotion. After you purchase this subscription, you will meet your soulmate within 10 days and begin a lifetime of happiness.
3. You *deserve* to take a trip to Hawaii and with this special offer, it's like going for free. Call now: 1-800...



# Ethos, Logos, and Pathos in Visual Arguments

Ethos, logos, and pathos are used to convince the reader of something. Likewise, these rhetorical appeals are also used in visual arguments—ads, television shows, documentaries, bumperstickers, commercials, posters, and billboards.

Let's look at some examples of how ethos, logos, and pathos are used in visual arguments...

# Ethos, Logos, and Pathos in Visual Arguments

## Example of Ethos in a Visual Argument:

When celebrities or other well-known people are used to persuade you, then ethos is being used. Because you recognize the famous person, you will be more likely to trust the product.



Does Jennifer Aniston make you want to buy Smart Water?

# Ethos, Logos, and Pathos in Visual Arguments

## Example of Logos in a visual argument:

As you can see here, an old cigarette ad attempts to persuade you of its worth by using the high number of 20,679 physicians who promote Lucky Strikes as a “less irritating” cigarette that will ward off “irritation against cough.”

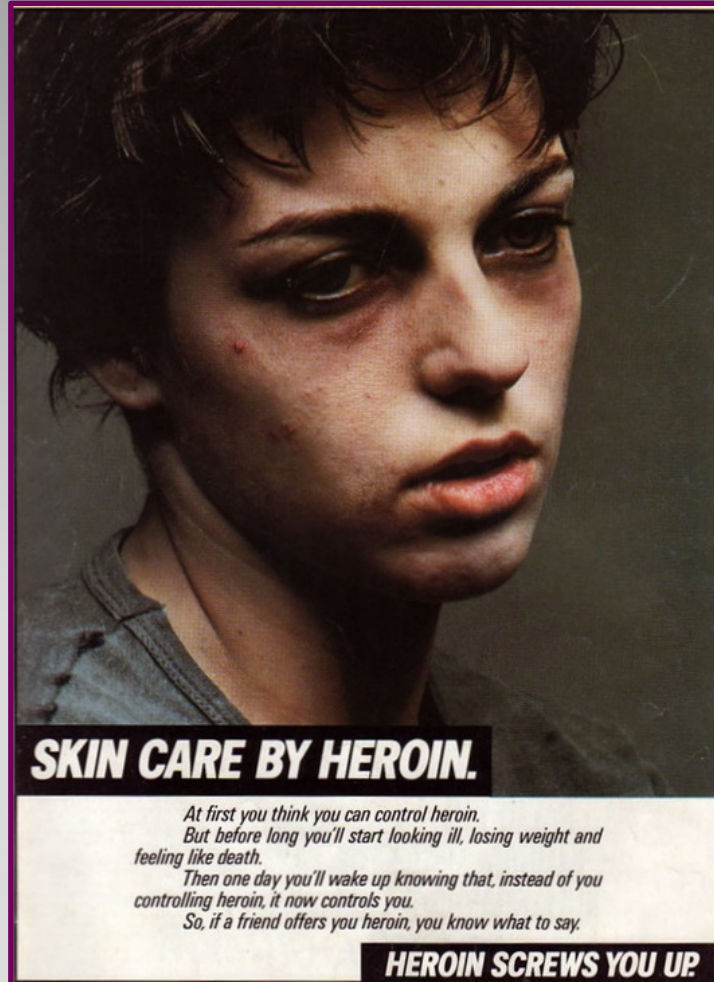
This is both an example of Logos *and* Ethos being used because along with the numbers being used, the credibility of physicians attempts to persuade us even more that Lucky Strikes are safe cigarettes.



# Ethos, Logos, and Pathos in Visual Arguments

## Example of Pathos in a visual argument:

In this visual argument against heroin, you can see that the most powerful aspect of this advertisement is a raw portrait of the effects of heroin on a person's appearance. The producers of this ad made sure to use casual language like "Skin care by heroin" and follow it with information and a final warning: "Heroin screws you up." This is a very clear use of pathos, for it is certain to create a strong emotional response from the viewer.





# Ethos, Logos, and Pathos

These rhetorical appeals are used to convince us (the audience). Once you begin recognizing these appeals in written and visual arguments, you will be on your way to breaking apart an argument...and effectively building an argument of your own.

*Think of it this way:*

ETHOS = relates to the writer (or company) making the claim

LOGOS = relates to the claim's ability to persuade the audience through facts and reasoning

PATHOS = relates to the audience's emotional reaction to the way the argument is conveyed

# Dissecting Written and Visual Arguments: Understanding the Rhetorical Appeals

