The Three Methods of Persuasion

When you consider all of the various actions that someone can take in order to persuade you of something or that you can take to persuade someone else of something, you will probably find that all of these actions can be classified into one of three major groups, which correspond with the three points of the rhetorical triangle. These three groups were first identified by the ancient Greeks; therefore, they are called by Greek names. Fortunately, we have some English equivalents for them.

- **Logos**
  - Greek word “logos” means *logic* or *reason*, and it is the root from which our word “logic” came as well as words like *geology* or *biology*. Logos corresponds with the topic of the writing, and it is concerned with the facts and the way in which they interact. We can use the English word “logic” to identify logos. The best question to ask regarding this method of persuasion is “What sense does it make?”

  *Example:* You want to stay out past your curfew of eleven o’clock.

- **Ethos**
  - Greek word “ethos” is the root for our word *ethics*. Ethos corresponds with the writer, and it is concerned with the way in which the writer is perceived by the audience. The best words to use as synonyms for ethos are probably “character,” or “trust.” The key question to ask when considering ethos is “Do I trust this writer?”

- **Pathos**
  - Greek word “pathos” means *emotion*, and it is the root from which our word “passion” came as well as words like *pathology* or *pathos*. Pathos corresponds with the audience, and it is concerned with the way in which the audience is moved by the writer. We can use the English word “emotion” to identify pathos. The best question to ask regarding this method of persuasion is “Does it make sense to me?”

**Notes on the Three Methods of Persuasion**

1. Logos (which comes from the Greek word “logos”) means: __________________________

2. Thus, Logos is an appeal to one’s: ______________________________________

3. Logos corresponds with the topic of writing in that it is concerned with: __________________________
4. Ethos (which comes from the Greek word “ethos”) refers to: __________________________

5. Thus ethos uses __________________________ to gain the audience’s trust.

6. Different types of ethos include:
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

7. Ethos corresponds with the writer in that it is concerned with:
   __________________________________________________________________________

8. Pathos (which comes from the Greek word “pathos”) means: __________________________

9. Thus, pathos intends to create an __________________________ within the audience.

10. Different types of pathos include:
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11. Pathos corresponds with the audience in that it
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

12. In reality, writing is a mixture of __________________, __________________, and
    __________________________

13. Aristotle was an advocate of which method?
    a. Pathos
    b. Ethos
    c. Logos
    d. All of the above

14. What did Aristotle think about pathos in writing?
    a. That there was too much emphasis placed on the method
    b. That writing can never contain too much pathos
    c. That the audience disregards appeals to emotion
    d. All of the above

15. Aristotle believe that establishing ethos with an audience requires an author to have:
    a. Strong opinions
    b. An expansive knowledge of the topic
    c. A great haircut
    d. All of the above
How Persuasive Can You Be?

Directions: Assume you have a driver’s license (even if you don’t yet). Write four separate arguments to your parent/guardians explaining why they should let you borrow the car this weekend. The first argument should use logos. The second argument should use ethos. The third argument should use pathos. The fourth argument, your best, should use logos, ethos, and pathos. Each argument should be about two-three sentences long. Remember to be as convincing as possible.

Argument One-Logos

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Argument Two-Ethos

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Argument Three-Pathos

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Argument Four-Logos/Ethos/Pathos

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Argument Three - Pathos

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Argument Four - Logos, Ethos, and Pathos

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