

• The Rhetorical Appeals

Ethos. Writers must consider how they present themselves to their audience. The authority and credibility of the author is also known as the author's ethos. Speakers must convince the audience of their reliability, although a few can convince listeners by name or reputation alone. Albert Einstein wouldn't have much trouble convincing most people that his opinions about physics are worthwhile and reliable. George W. Bush's ideas on foreign policy garner immediate respect in some circles and debate in others. However, most people have to convince the audience of their ethos through other means.

Pathos. Pathos refers to emotional appeals to the audience. In traditional academic writing, emotions tend to be dismissed in favor of reason, facts and logic, but certainly there are effective as well as ineffective ways of using pathos in writing, particularly when writing an argument. In some cases, applying pathos may help the writer connect with their audience so emotion may be used as a persuasive tool.

Logos. When a writer relies on logic or reason to make her argument, this is an appeal to logos. It is related to ethos because who or what the writer deems logical must also be considered logical by the audience. Most writing for the sciences is based on logical explanations. When someone says, "If the legislature is truly a representative body, then women should make up 51% of its membership," that person assumes the audience will agree with the logic that "representative" means "representative of the makeup of the population of this country."

What Rhetoric can do

The following variations show how a speaker can change the focus or meaning of a sentence simply by putting stress on different words, that is, by saying certain words louder:

MARY wrecked her motorcycle in Phoenix during the winter break. (It wasn't Diane who did it.)

Mary wrecked her MOTORCYCLE in Phoenix during the winter break. (Not her car).

Mary wrecked her motorcycle in PHOENIX during the winter break. (Not in Vegas.)

Mary wrecked her motorcycle in Phoenix during the WINTER break. (Not spring break.)

In reading the following sentences aloud, you'll notice that you automatically stress the word or phrase following *was*:

It was Mary who wrecked her motorcycle in Phoenix during the winter break.

It was her motorcycle that Mary wrecked in Phoenix during the winter break.

It was in Phoenix that Mary wrecked her motorcycle during the winter break.

It was during the winter break that Mary wrecked her motorcycle.

Adapted: Kolln, Marta and Robert Funk. *Understanding English Grammar*, 8th ed. Glenview, IL: Longman, 2009.