

Name: _____ Date: _____

Rhetorical Appeals

Objectives: By completing this worksheet, you will be able to identify rhetorical appeals and evaluate how effectively authors and speakers use them to persuade audiences.

Logos, Ethos, and Pathos

The three main rhetorical appeals are logos, ethos, and pathos. Each describes a different way that a speaker or a writer might **try to persuade an audience**.

Logos is an appeal to **logic and common sense**. An example of logos is presenting facts and statistics to win over an audience, as is the use of sound reasoning.

Examples:

- Wearing seatbelts is a smart choice; they saved nearly 15,000 lives in 2017 alone.
- If we agree that harming dogs is wrong, shouldn't that logical thinking apply to cows and pigs too?

Ethos is an appeal to either the **character or authority** of the person making the argument or that of someone the person is referencing.

Examples:

- I should be your class president because I have straight As and a positive outlook.
- As Gandhi once said, "Be the change that you wish to see in the world."

Pathos is an appeal to **emotion**. Examples include any argument or word choice that triggers feelings of fear, desire, affection, pride, and so on.

Examples:

- Don't feel safe in your own home? Vote for Senator Sonia Ortega for change!
- Buy the new Cobra LE to leave traffic, and your worries, in the dust.

Activity 1

Instructions: Read each example and identify the rhetorical appeal *primarily* being used. The first one is completed for you as a model.

1. Donate today and help this cuddly, lonely puppy find a new home. **Pathos**
2. Studies conducted by the nation's top three medical schools show that exercising every day can increase one's lifespan. _____
3. Dr. Kulkarni, who has practiced medicine for 30 years, agrees that engaging in activity for at least 20 minutes a day can improve heart health. _____
4. In all the time I have been a student, I have never once cheated. _____
5. Don't get left behind! Be one of the cool kids and pre-order *Kick Storm III* today!

6. If two people do the same job equally well, it makes sense to pay them equally.

7. Raising workers' wages will grow the local economy by 2–4 percent. _____
8. Mayor Greene promised to fix the potholes and broken sidewalks that plague downtown Kingsville; instead, she added a butterfly garden in her gated neighborhood park.

9. Ready to travel in luxury? Executive Limo Rentals has a car waiting for you.

10. Albert Einstein's immortal words should serve as a warning to us all. _____

Understanding Kairos

Kairos describes **the timing of a rhetorical appeal**—in other words, **an appeal that happens at the right place and the right time**. Kairos isn't a separate appeal from logos, pathos, or ethos. Instead, any appeal can be considered kairotic as long as it's effective given the rhetorical situation. Here are some examples of rhetorical situations:

- a pamphlet for truckers in Iowa who are unhappy with their pay
- an animation aimed at children for their first day of kindergarten

Review how a person can use an appeal in a way that is and isn't **kairotic** in each situation:

Rhetorical situation: A speech to veterans who all served in a major war 10 years ago:

INEFFECTIVE: Immediately listing facts and figures about the war (logos)

EFFECTIVE: Sharing one's history of military service before focusing on the facts (ethos)

In this situation, by starting out with a logos appeal and explaining the topic to an already familiar audience can seem disrespectful. To be **kairotic**, the speaker should use an appeal that is sensitive to the audience's expertise by acknowledging their shared experiences.

Rhetorical situation: An advertisement for a group of young readers in the present day:

INEFFECTIVE: Referencing Elvis Presley and Nirvana to appear hip and cool (ethos)

EFFECTIVE: Referencing a respected civil rights leader whose message resonates (ethos)

In this situation, the writer can misjudge the type of ethos appeal. Using the cultural references of a particular time or generation can limit the appeal to anyone outside the frame of reference. It is more **kairotic** to make a cultural reference that the audience will understand and respect than to appeal to a particular time or generation that may not be relevant to the audience.

Activity 2

Instructions: In this activity, you will complete the table by evaluating **kairos** in three passages. First, describe which **rhetorical appeals** the author of each passage relies on: **logos**, **ethos**, or **pathos**—and how you identified it. Then describe how **kairotic** these appeals are given the rhetorical situation. Is each appeal effective? Why or why not? The first one is completed for you as a model.

Rhetorical Situation	Passage	Evaluation of Kairos
A present day commercial for kids' shoes	Moms: Think about your kids' feet. Bobbi Carrington Shoes will help your son look great when he makes the winning goal and does what active boys do best: move. Don't let him be embarrassed on the football field with outdated, cheap shoes. Girls shoes are also available.	<i>This appeal is an example of pathos because it's targeted at readers' emotions: fear of their child feeling embarrassed. It's ineffective for the rhetorical situation because the ad is in the present day, yet assumes only moms buy their kids' shoes and only boys play sports. Also, the audience is more likely to worry about the shoes' price and fit, not their appearance. Focusing on these details would have been more kairotic because it takes the elements in the rhetorical situation into account.</i>
An email from a school to an audience of concerned parents after an intruder was found on campus	It has come to our attention that an intruder was found on campus yesterday. Thanks our front office actively monitoring the courtyard cameras, security was immediately notified and asked the intruder to leave before he interacted with students. The intruder was identified as a salesperson trying to hand out free meal vouchers to a new pizzeria in the community.	

A paper printed for present-day elementary school students about dental health	Typical causes of tooth decay, including cavities, can be correlated to the buildup of plaque and the deterioration of tooth enamel. Fluoride is proven to reinforce the enamel, which is why it is essential that any toothpaste you purchase contains at least 0.22% fluoride.	
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