

ME

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• Reading Comprehension Assessment

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

Tools of Persuasion

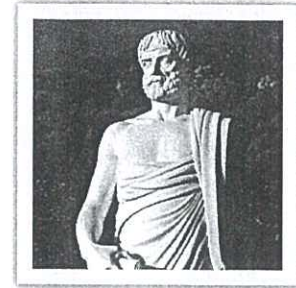
Persuasion is the art of convincing someone to agree with your point of view. According to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, there are three basic tools of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos.

Ethos is a speaker's way of convincing the audience that she is a credible source. An audience will consider a speaker credible if she seems trustworthy, reliable, and sincere. This can be done in many ways. For example, a speaker can develop ethos by explaining how much experience or education she has in the field. After all, you would be more likely to listen to advice about how to take care of your teeth from a dentist than a firefighter. A speaker can also create ethos by convincing the audience that she is a good person who has their best interests at heart. If an audience cannot trust you, you will not be able to persuade them.

Pathos is a speaker's way of connecting with an audience's emotions. For example, a speaker who is trying to convince an audience to vote for him might say that he alone can save the country from a terrible war. These words are intended to fill the audience with fear, thus making them want to vote for him. Similarly, a charity organization that helps animals might show an audience pictures of injured dogs and cats. These images are intended to fill the viewers with pity. If the audience feels bad for the animals, they will be more likely to donate money.

Logos is the use of facts, information, statistics, or other evidence to make your argument more convincing. An audience will be more likely to believe you if you have data to back up your claims. For example, a commercial for soap might tell you that laboratory tests have shown that their soap kills all 7,000,000 of the bacteria living on your hands right now. This piece of information might make you more likely to buy their brand of soap. Presenting this evidence is much more convincing than simply saying "our soap is the best!" Use of logos can also increase a speaker's ethos; the more facts a speaker includes in his argument, the more likely you are to think that he is educated and trustworthy.

Although ethos, pathos, and logos all have their strengths, they are often most effective when they are used together. Indeed, most speakers use a combination of ethos, pathos, and logos to persuade their audiences. The next time you listen to a speech, watch a commercial, or listen to a friend try to convince you to lend him some money, be on the lookout for these ancient Greek tools of persuasion.



1) As used in paragraph 2, what is the best antonym for **credible**?

- A. unintelligent
- B. boring
- C. dishonest
- D. amazing

2) Amy is trying to convince her mother to buy her a pair of \$200 shoes. She says: "Mom, the shoes I have are really old and ugly. If I don't get these new shoes, everyone at school is going to laugh at me. I will be so embarrassed that I will want to die." What form of persuasion is Amy using here?

- A. pathos
- B. ethos
- C. logos
- D. a combination of ethos, pathos, and logos

- 3) According to the passage, logos can build ethos because
- A. an audience is more easily convinced by facts and information than simple appeals to emotions like pity or fear
 - B. an audience is more likely to trust a speaker who uses evidence to support his argument
 - C. a speaker who overuses pathos might make an audience too emotional; audiences who are too frightened or too sad are unlikely to be persuaded
 - D. a speaker can use misleading or false information to make his argument seem more convincing
- 4) Gareth is running for mayor. He tells his audience: "Under our current mayor, there have been 15,000 new cases of unemployment. If he stays in office, who knows how many more people will lose their jobs? The number could go up even higher. When I was the CEO of Magnatech, I helped to create over 1,000 new jobs. I can do the same thing for this city if you vote for me." Which form of persuasion is Gareth using here?
- I. pathos
 - II. logos
 - III. ethos
- A. I only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III
- 5) According to the passage, the most effective tool of persuasion is
- A. ethos, because you cannot persuade an audience that does not trust you
 - B. logos, because it can also be used to build ethos
 - C. a combination of ethos, pathos, and logos
 - D. pathos, because human beings are most easily persuaded by emotion
- 6) Imagine you wanted to convince an uninformed person to take a political position that is the same as yours. What issue would you try to talk to this person about? How would you include ethos, pathos, and logos in your persuasion? Make your case below.

For example, I take the side of dismantling nuclear weapons instead of using them for wars. I would use ethos by reading stories or saying quotes from experts such as scientists or activists in this field of warfare. I would use pathos by mentioning the lives that have been taken or destroyed by these weapons. Finally, I would use logos by mentioning the number of people that were killed by these weapons. Or the amount of money that these weapons waste, which could be used for helping the country.

- 7) Some persuasive programming involves only ethos, some involves only pathos, and some involves only logos. Which of these single-tactic persuasion types do you find most effective? Which one are least effective? Why?

I think the most effective persuasion type is ethos. Because having someone who knows or is an expert in that topic is more reliable than someone who knows facts or feelings only. I would say the least effective is pathos. Because you only have the feelings or emotions about that topic with basic information. You don't have any facts or in-depth knowledge so you are less reliable. In conclusion, you are most likely to rely on an experts rather than a person who just has basic knowledge and a lot of emotion towards it. ✓

- 8) Sometimes ethos, pathos, and logos can be used to make people believe things that are not entirely true. Can you think of an example? How can people avoid being tricked by faulty persuasion tactics?

You can use ethos, pathos, and logos to make people that something is not entirely true in things such as rumors like Bigfoot or gossip. Ethos by getting witnesses to speak about something that they are very unsure about. Pathos by having strong emotional feelings about it. And Logos by mentioning the number of sitings the rumor has had. People can avoid this by researching these topics or asking actual experts in this field to double check. ✓

