



## Module 9: Nonfiction

### Topic 4 Content: The Rhetorical Triangle

#### Introduction



A Greek philosopher named Aristotle once proposed that effective persuasion relies on the use of logical appeals (logos), emotional appeals (pathos), and ethical appeals (ethos). The balance of these three components is known as the **rhetorical triangle**. Click each section of the rhetorical triangle to learn more.

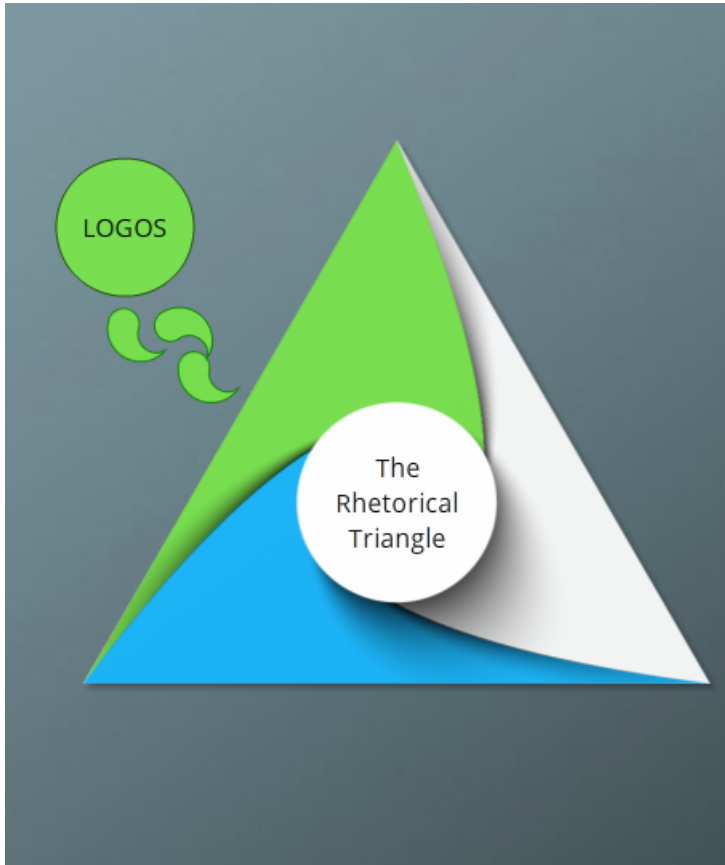


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#### Logos



**Logos** is an appeal to logic. Arguments based on logos use reasoning or offer proof in order to persuade. Cause-and-effect claims, scientific or statistical evidence, and expert testimony can be found in arguments that make logical appeals. In this kind of appeal, the speaker often anticipates the opposing argument and is ready to reply with a rebuttal.

When analyzing a persuasive argument, ask yourself the following questions to help you determine whether an appeal to logos is being used.

- Does the speaker base her argument on credible evidence?
- Does the speaker use logical reasoning to support her claim?
- Does the speaker examine and identify flaws in the opposing argument?

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#### Pathos



**Pathos** is an appeal to the emotions of the audience. Arguments based on pathos effectively tap into the feelings, beliefs, and values of the audience in order to connect with them and then sway their opinion. The speaker must be very knowledgeable of her audience in order to use pathos effectively.

When analyzing a persuasive argument, ask yourself the following questions to help you determine whether an appeal to pathos is being used.

- Does the speaker warn of danger to safety or well-being?
- Does the speaker empathize with the pain or distress of others?
- Does the speaker appeal to hope for a better future?

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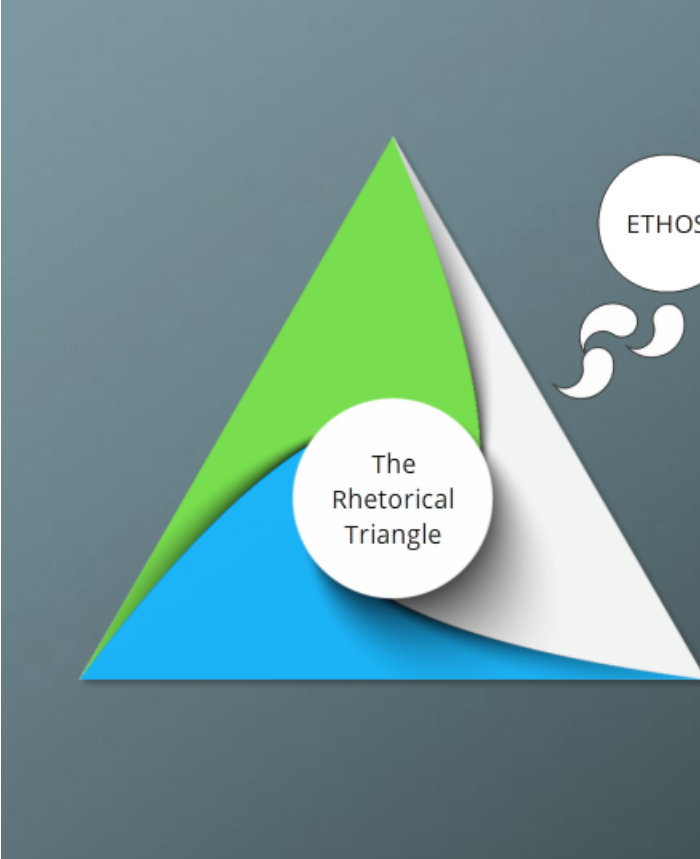
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#### Ethos



**Ethos** is an appeal to credibility. Arguments based on ethos attempt to earn the trust of the audience by establishing the reliability or authority of the speaker or another source. A speaker employing ethos should avoid anything that could discourage the audience from hearing her argument, such as taking an aggressive tone or showing disrespect toward the opposition.

When analyzing a persuasive argument, ask yourself the following questions to help you determine whether an appeal to ethos is being used.

- Does the speaker establish her knowledge of or experience with the issue?
- Does the speaker make connections between her and the audience?
- Is the speaker respectful of (albeit in disagreement with) the opposing viewpoint?

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