

Rhetorical Strategies

**Techniques for
Persuasive Argument**

Ethos

A writer establishes credibility or reliability when he or she. . .

- uses only credible, reliable sources to build your argument and cite those sources properly.
- respects the reader by stating the opposing position accurately.
- establishes common ground with your audience. Most of the time, this feat can be accomplished by acknowledging values and beliefs shared by those on both sides of the argument.
- discloses why you are interested in this topic or what personal experiences you have had with the topic.
- organizes the argument in a logical, easy-to-follow manner..
- proofreads the argument. (Too many careless grammar mistakes cast doubt on your character as a writer.)

Pathos

A writer effectively appeals to the reader's needs, values, and emotional sensibilities when he or she. . .

- uses sources such as interviews and individual stories to paint a more legitimate and moving picture of reality or illuminate the truth.
- only uses an emotional appeal if it truly supports the claims that the writer' is making, not as a way to distract from the real issues.
- never uses emotion to misrepresent the topic or frighten people.

Logos

the appeal to reason relies on logic and reason

- ***Inductive reasoning***
takes a specific representative case or facts and then draws generalizations or conclusions from them.
- ***Deductive reasoning***
begins with a generalization and then applies it to a specific case.

Logical Fallacies to Avoid

- ***Slippery Slope***

This fallacy is a conclusion based on the premise that if A happens, then eventually through a series of small steps, through B, C, . . . , X, Y, Z will happen—thus, equating A and Z. So, if we don't want Z to occur A must not be allowed to occur either.

Logical Fallacies to Avoid

- ***Hasty Generalization***

This illogical argument is a conclusion based on insufficient or biased evidence. In other words, you are rushing to a conclusion before you have all the relevant facts.

Logical Fallacies to Avoid

- ***Post hoc ergo propter hoc:***

This baseless conclusion is one that assumes that if *A* occurred after *B* then *B* must have caused *A*.

Logical Fallacies to Avoid

- ***Genetic Fallacy:***

A conclusion is based on an argument that the origins of a person, idea, institute, or theory determine its character, nature, or worth.

Logical Fallacies to Avoid

- ***Begging the Claim:***

The conclusion that the writer should prove is assumed within the claim.

Logical Fallacies to Avoid

- ***Circular Argument:***

This fallacy restates the argument rather than actually proving it.

Logical Fallacies to Avoid

- **Either/or:**

This specious argument is a conclusion that oversimplifies the argument by reducing it to only two sides or choices.

Logical Fallacies to Avoid

- ***Ad hominem:***

This fallacy is an attack on the character of a person rather than their opinions or arguments.

Logical Fallacies to Avoid

- ***Ad populum:***

This fallacy is an emotional appeal that focuses on positive (such as patriotism, religion, democracy) or negative (such as terrorism or fascism) concepts rather than the real issue at hand.

Logical Fallacies to Avoid

- ***Red Herring:***

This illogical argument is a diversionary tactic that avoids the key issues, often by avoiding opposing arguments rather than addressing them.