

# Quick Reference Guide: Rhetorical Appeals

By Karen Langbehn

Rhetorical Appeal	Abbreviated Definition	Reflective Questions
<b>Ethos</b>	<p>appeal to credibility</p> <p><i>You may want to think of ethos as related to “ethics,” or the moral principles of the writer: ethos is the author’s way of establishing trust with his or her reader.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why should I (the reader) read what the writer has written?</li> <li>How does the author cite that he or she has something valid and important for me to read?</li> <li>Does the author mention his or her education or professional experience, or convince me that he or she is a valid, educated, and experienced source?</li> </ul>
<b>Pathos</b>	<p>appeal to emotion</p> <p><i>You may want to think of pathos as “empathy,” which pertains to the experience of or sensitivity toward emotion.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is the writer trying to make me feel, or what has he or she written that makes me want to do something?</li> <li>What specific parts of the author’s writing make me feel happy, sad, inspired, dejected, and so on?</li> </ul>
<b>Logos</b>	<p>appeal to logic</p> <p><i>You may want to think of logos as “logic,” because something that is logical “makes sense”—it is reasonable.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What evidence does the writer provide that convinces me that his or her argument is logical—that it makes sense?</li> <li>What proof is the author offering me?</li> </ul>
<b>Kairos</b>	<p>appeal to timeliness</p> <p><i>You may want to think of kairos as the type of persuasion that pertains to “the right place and the right time.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the writer make claims that are particularly important given what is happening right now?</li> <li>How is the author “making the most of the moment” or attempting to speak to the concern of his or her audience?</li> </ul>