

When being introduced to rhetorical concepts, among the first appeals students learn about are the rhetorical appeals. There are three main appeals that can be used: ethos, pathos, and logos. Although this handout does provide examples of each appeal below, it is important to note that a piece of media or text might actually contain more than one appeal. For example, one sentence might contain elements of two separate appeals, and that's ok! We've only separated them out to help you better identify how these parts work on their own.

## Ethos

Ethos is all about credibility—is the source coming from research that is reliable and has a good reputation? A writer can use ethos to show readers why they are the best person to be writing or talking about a particular topic or issue. Sometimes, ethos can be established through a writer's experiences, education, work, or research.

Take this biography that was posted in the article "What They Take with Them: Findings from the Peer Writing Tutor Alumni Research Project" published in the *Writing Center Journal*. Since the *Writing Center Journal* is a peer-reviewed, academic source, the name of the journal also has a positive ethos appeal. However, this biography gives the reader an understanding why Dr. Hughes is the right person to write about this particular topic.

Hughes' current projects immerse him in writing center scholarship.

Hughes' job title and location indicates his prominence in the writing center field.

Professional tone and language subtly add to the ethos appeal.

At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Bradley Hughes has been director of the writing center since 1984 and director of writing across the curriculum since 1990. He co-chaired the IWCA Summer Institutes in 2003, 2008, and 2009. His most recent publication, co-authored with colleagues, focuses on writing center podcasts (*Writing Lab Newsletter*, 2009). Together with colleagues at UW-Madison, he's currently developing an authoring program for creating computer simulations to use in tutor education, which will be distributed as open-source software starting in 2011.

The extracurricular activities listed relate to the article's topic.

The publications named are relevant to the topic and field.

## Logos

Although many people will associate using numbers and statistics with logos, logos also includes logic and reasoning. In this way, logos appeals can be more subtly communicated. Note that logos appeals are different from logical fallacies, which contain flawed reasoning or logic and should be avoided.

There is plenty of justification provided as to why this research method was selected.

The survey itself is deliberately open-ended and flexible because we wanted to give alumni room to respond in ways we could never anticipate, and because we want colleagues who participate in the PWTARP to replicate or adapt our survey design to their own institutions and to their own research goals. We tried to design open-ended questions that would elicit full responses, not too scripted, we hoped, by the questions.

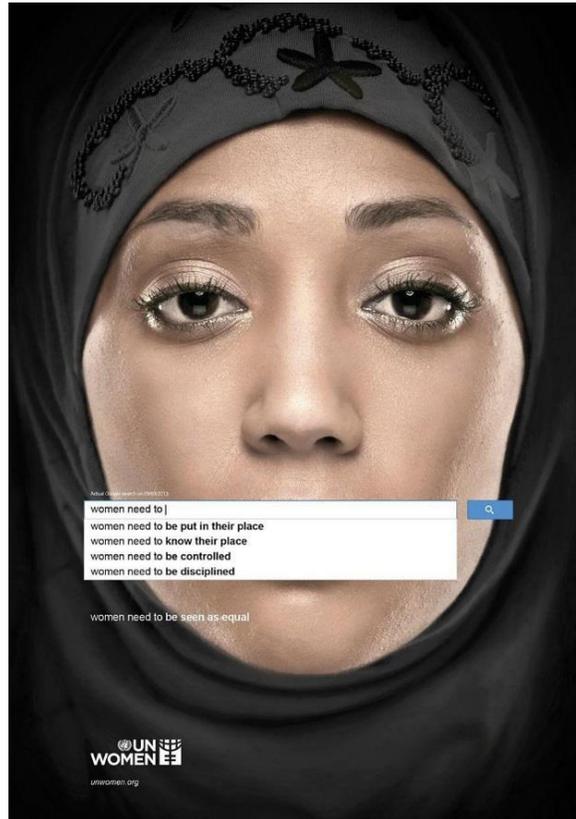
The reasons listed are practical rather than emotional.

## Pathos

Unlike logos, pathos appeals rely heavily on emotional manipulation. Pathos can trigger any kind of emotions in the reader ranging from sadness to anger. These appeals are particularly effective in terms of connecting with the audience, and giving the message a personal and relatable touch.

Her eyes are expressive and clear—the way the ad is designed has you look at her face as you read the text.

Her mouth covered as if she is being spoken over by the search results, which evokes an emotional response.



Putting the women's face directly behind the text increases emotional impact since we can see directly who is being discussed.

The Google search bar is familiar and widely used. The idea that this is on a common search engine increases its emotional appeal.

## Tips for Incorporating Rhetorical Appeals in Your Writing

- Consider your [audience](#) and [rhetorical situation](#) to make smart choices.
- Be mindful of your tone and word choices—small word choices can have big consequences!
- Use appeals together-- just because you are presenting a logical argument doesn't mean you have to avoid emotional appeals as well. The best arguments blend appeals together for a multi-layered effect.
- Sometimes you can drive audiences away if you use too much of a certain appeal. For example, if using too much pathos, your audience may have a less sympathetic response or may feel manipulated.

Hughes, Bradley, et al. "What They Take with Them: Findings from the Peer Writing Tutor Alumni Research Project." *The Writing Center Journal*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2010, pp. 12–46, [www.jstor.org/stable/43442343](http://www.jstor.org/stable/43442343).

UN Women. "UN Women Ad Series Reveals Widespread Sexism." 21 Oct. 2013, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/10/women-should-ads>.