Along with Grammar and Logic, rhetoric is one of the three ancient arts of discourse, or verbal (meaning with words) communication. Rhetoric is the art of speaking or writing effectively – to serve your desired purpose. Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E) defined rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion."

Some theorists claim that language is inherently persuasive. When you say "Hi, how’s it going?" for instance, in one sense you're arguing that your hello deserves a response. Visual and verbal messages contain arguments. They express a point of view. Readers/listeners/viewers are intended to react.

At its best, rhetoric is a thoughtful, reflective activity leading to effective communication, including rational exchange of opposing viewpoints. In Aristotle’s time and in ours, those who understand and can use the available means to appeal to an audience of one or many find themselves in a position of strength. They have the tools to resolve conflicts without confrontation, to persuade readers/listeners to support their position, or to move people to take action.

Aristotle described the interaction among subject, speaker, and audience (or subject, writer, and reader) in what has come to be known as the Rhetorical Triangle.

The interaction of text, writer (speaker), and reader (audience) determines the structure and language of an argument. To be effective, one considers "S.O.A.P.S."

- **Subject** – The general topic, content, and ideas contained in the text.
- **Occasion** – The time and place of the piece; the context that encouraged the writing to happen.
- **Audience** – The group of readers (listeners) to whom this piece is directed.
- **Purpose** – The goal the speaker/writer wants to achieve.
- **Speaker** – The voice that tells the story – Aristotle called it the persona. The author and the speaker are not always the same person.

These combine to provide the rhetorical situation.
The Rhetorical Situation

- The subject, occasion, audience, purpose, and speaker will work together to determine your rhetorical situation — the situation which generates your need for writing.
- Consider the speech Al Gore would give about global warming to an audience of true believers versus an audience of skeptics versus an audience of climate scientists versus an audience of elementary schoolchildren – each would present a different rhetorical situation.

Ethos, Pathos, Logos

- Aristotle taught that a speaker’s ability to persuade is based on how well the speaker appeals to his or her audience in three different areas: ethos (ethical appeals), pathos (emotional appeals), and logos (logical appeals).

Ethos, Pathos, Logos

- Ethos relates to the writer/speaker.
  - Trust me
- Logos relates to the text.
  - Here are my facts
- Pathos relates to the reader/audience.
  - Experience some emotions through what I am saying

Rhetorical Triangle

- Ethos, pathos, and logos conform to the Rhetorical Triangle.

Rhetorical Triangle

- And in the middle is the Message.
Rhetorical Triangle

**Pathos**
- The appeal of the text to the emotions/interests of the audience

**Ethos**
- The appeal of the text to the credibility and character of the speaker

**Logos**
- The appeal of the text based on the logical structure of its argument or mental ideas

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**Ethos**
- Greek for “character”
- We believe those whom we respect
- Focuses on the *speaker* or *writer*
- Refers to how well the writer presents herself: character, credibility, reliability
  - Does she seem knowledgeable and reasonable?
  - Does she seem trustworthy?
  - Does she treat her opponents fairly and respectfully?
  - Does she try to establish common ground with the reader?
- The impact of ethos is often called the argument’s **ethical appeal**.

**Ethos Examples**
- Look at the accomplished alumni of our college!
- We’ve been in business since 1935!
- “I disagree with my honorable opponent, the senator from the great state of Missouri.”
- Four out of five dentists say Crest works best!
- We’ve got that lady from Grey’s Anatomy in our car ads and you trust her, right, because she’s Addison Montgomery, a doctor on TV!
- OnStar commercials with actual emergency responses. We’re good – we respond!
- “As parents, we all…,” “As women, we all…”

**Establishing Ethos**
- You dress nicely for your college interview, court case, etc.
- You use proper grammar/punctuation in your speaking/writing.
- You appear restrained, sincere, fair-minded, reasoned. You establish ethos through your reasonable **tone**.
- You establish likely shared views/values with your readers
- When analyzing text, note how the author establishes **ethos**.

**Ethos – When misapplied…**
- Can become unfair or dishonest.
- Can distort or misrepresent information (biased).
- When overused, can suggest elitism.
- Can be insulting or dismissive of other viewpoints.
  - “I’m so smart, blah, blah, blah, I’m an expert! I went to Harvard!”

**Logos**
- Greek for “word”
- Focus on the argument, not the person making it
- How is the intellect being appealed to?
- What is being argued? What is the thesis?
- How is it being supported?
- Are the arguments being presented logically and based upon facts? Are counterarguments included/refuted?
- The impact of logos is often called the argument’s **logical appeal** or **rational appeal**.
Logos

Rational appeals (logic) make use of two types of reasoning: inductive and deductive.

- **Inductive reasoning** generalizes a conclusion from facts, based on probabilities. Inductive reasoning is based upon arguments which do not contain categorical support for a conclusion. Rather, they confer only probability on the conclusion by drawing from examples, which means that it is possible for premises to be true and the conclusion false.
  - Example: Most people like ice cream. Suzy is a person. Suzy likes ice cream. Logically correct, but perhaps not true.
  - Example: Every dog I’ve seen has four legs. All dogs have four legs. Logically correct, and true.

The rhetorical equivalent of inductive reasoning is the example. Facts are derived by repeated observations.

Logos

Deductive reasoning uses generally accepted propositions to derive specific conclusions. Unlike induction, deductive arguments provide absolute support for a conclusion. Deductive reasoning makes the strong assertion that the conclusion must follow the premises, because they are generally accepted.

- Example: If all human beings are mortal, and I am a human being, I must be mortal. Notice that the critical difference between this example and the inductive examples is the use of “all” rather than “most” or “some.”
- The rhetorical equivalent of deductive reasoning is the syllogism. Facts are derived by combining existing “truths.”

Logos

**Syllogism** – a simple form of deductive reasoning, yet one of the most powerful types of logical arguments.

- Always includes a major premise (typically relating to a group); a minor premise (relating to a singular); and a conclusion implied by the previous two premises.
  - All dogs can bark.
  - Spot is a dog.
  - Spot can bark.
- Recall that words like “some,” “many,” “most” are signs that the logic of an argument may be flawed.
  - Oak trees are fast-growing plants.
  - Some fast-growing plants don’t need much water.
  - Oak trees don’t need much water.

Logical Fallacies

- There are several fallacies in logical reasoning and argument that, if understood, can be identified and disposed of properly. They signal poor rhetorical skills and a lack of intellectual rigor.
  - We will get to these later, but here’s an example: Calling people with whom you disagree nasty names is a logical fallacy called the **Ad Hominem** (personal) attack.
    - Example: That candidate’s tax plan is stupid because he is a greedy rich guy who doesn’t care about people.

Logos Examples

- A study of over 1,000 users showed this is the best skin cream.
- A Gallup poll says 60% of Americans want higher fuel-mileage cars.
- NASA scientists believe there was once water on Mars after studying hundreds of images of the planet.

Examples are used to back up claims:

- Facts
- Studies
- Statistics
- Charts
- Experiments

Logos – When misapplied...

- Can lead to over-generalized claims
- Logical fallacies (If ‘A’ is true in this case, it’s true in all cases, etc.)
- Evidence misused or ignored
- No recognition of opposing views
- Can be overly dry with the wrong audience
Pathos

- Greek for “suffering” or “experience”
- Appeals to the emotions and values of the audience
- How does the writer tap into the emotions of the reader?
- How does the writer make the argument “matter” to the reader?
- Often conveyed through a narrative or an anecdote (think kids, kitties, old people – things that make you go “awwww”).
- Appeals to sadness, pride, fear, anger, love, justice, patriotism, identity, self-interest, etc. – the emotional appeal
- Many rhetoricians view pathos as the strongest of the appeals, but also lament the power of emotion to sway the mind.

Pathos Examples

- Sarah McLachlan with all those sad puppies and kittens while her song “Angel” plays in the background.
- The Save the Children campaign with photos of suffering, malnourished children: “For the price of a cup of coffee, you can…”
- Candidates for political office who use photographs of themselves with their cute children and families, or with soldiers, babies, handicapped people, etc.

Pathos – When misapplied...

- Becomes a substitute for logic and reason
  - Can offer simple, emotional reactions to complex problems
- Takes advantage of emotions to manipulate rather than convince credibly
  - Examples?
- Uses stereotypes to pit one group of people against another
  - Examples?
- Can provoke “lower emotions”: lust, greed, envy, revenge
  - Examples?

Pathos

- Arguments that appeal only to the emotions are by definition weak intellectual arguments
  - They are generally propagandistic in purpose – designed to sway opinion cheaply rather than present information genuinely
  - They are generally more polemical than persuasive – one-sided and usually against an idea, opinion or doctrine rather than for one.

Rhetoric

- The way a writer uses ethos, logos, and pathos will determine his or her rhetorical success.
- Most effective arguments will use all three appeals, though one or another may be emphasized depending on the purpose and audience.

Review

- Ethos
  - Writer/Speaker centered
  - Credibility or ethics
- Logos
  - Argument centered
  - Logic or facts
- Pathos
  - Audience centered
  - Emotions or values
One tiny little caveat…

- Now that you know the meaning of ethos/pathos/logos…

Do NOT use those terms in your analysis! Instead, use phrasing like…

  The author appeals to emotion when…
  The author establishes her credibility when…
  The author presents a logical case by…

Visual Rhetoric

- Images, like words, can be used to create meaning or construct an argument.

Photo from Harvard University Admissions page. What is being conveyed? Ethos? Pathos? Logos?