

Rhetorical Strategies *Voice & Audience*

“In his *Rhetorica* Aristotle delineates between artistic and inartistic proofs. Inartistic proofs are merely used by the rhetor; artistic proofs are invented. Aristotle then identifies the three canonical modes of artistic proof: ethos, pathos and logos on grounds that, in order to persuade, one must exude good character, move the audience by appealing to emotions, and, of course, advance good reasons. Aristotle further asserts that a trustworthy character is one of the requisites of persuading because persons are more readily persuaded by those whom they trust.”
(<http://www2.dsu.nodak.edu/users/jtallmon/epl.htm>, downloaded August 23, 2004)

I. Rhetorical Strategies/Tools

- A. **Ethos:** the ethical argument of a discourse that depends on establishing the credibility and the goodwill, perhaps even “morality” of the speaker
1. Intelligence and Common Sense
 - a) using arguments that sound reasonable
 - b) not overstating your case
 - c) acknowledging other viewpoints or potential problems
 2. Virtue and Good Character
 - a) connecting yourself or your case to persons of integrity, good repute, fame
 - b) placing your issue within a larger framework (moral, political, religious, etc.) with which you believe your audience will agree
 3. Goodwill
 - a) acknowledging and giving careful consideration to the audience’s viewpoint
 - b) reminding your audience of common interests and concerns
 - c) demonstrating that you acknowledge the audience’s intelligence and common sense
- B. **Pathos:** the means of persuading an audience through *emotions* such as sympathy and tenderness, anger and distress. Imagery, imagination, and anecdotes (mini-stories) can be used to great effect.

To pull at your audience’s heartstrings, you must know where their hearts lie. Consider issues like:

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|----------------------------|--------------------|---|
| --Gender | --Race | --Marriage status |
| --Political affiliation | --Religious belief | --Nationality |
| --Socioeconomic background | --Age | --Shared tragedy or victory (local, national) |
| --General knowledge | --public issues | --popular entertainment |

- C. **Logos:** the means of appealing to an audience through *logical reasoning*, reasoning which is true (based on fact) and which follows a logical progression
1. Argument by **induction**: moving from a particular instance to a general truth (such conclusions may indeed be probable, but are not necessarily fact)
 - a) example: one shocked by the ending of Vertigo or Psycho assumes that *all* of Alfred Hitchcock’s movies have such surprising conclusions
 - b) example: a lady misdiagnosed by her doctor decides doctors *in general* are incompetent.
 - c) example: a guy who fails to get a woman pregnant after protected intercourse concludes that protected sex will *never* lead to pregnancy

2. Argument by **deduction**: moving from a general statement to a particular instance (such conclusions may sound logical, yet actually be faulty if any of the premises are wrong)
 - a) example: All men with soapy suds on their hands are washing dishes. This man who just answered the door when I rang the doorbell has soapy hands. Therefore, this man *is* washing dishes. [This is faulty reasoning because the premise is wrong; a man with soapy hands might be in the process of doing laundry, bathing a child, etc.)
 - b) example: Loud music causes hearing loss. A friend of mine listens to loud music all day long. Therefore, my friend *must* be damaging his hearing. [This reasoning is almost solid, but not quite, as a very small minority said to have “iron ears” can be around very loud noise frequently and never damage their hearing.]

II. Speaker and Audience Dynamics

A. Insider to Insider:

1. a professional within a profession, field, or party writing for others in the same discipline
2. specialized vocabulary; assumptions made about shared knowledge base
3. examples: medical and scientific journals, political or religious newsletters for members, etc.

B. Insider to Outsider:

1. a professional within a discipline writing for an audience outside the profession
2. audience not familiar with the scientific terms of that particular discourse community; thus, author avoids lots of specialized language and uses more readily comprehensible examples
3. examples: doctor writing editorial for newspaper, a film director or scientist who appears on show of Jay Leno or David Letterman and tones down their vocabulary for general audience; a professor writing for students in an introductory course

C. Outsider to Insider:

1. a non-professional writing for a professional
2. *attempts* may be made at using a specialized vocabulary
3. examples: student writing exam or essay for a professor; a job applicant writing an essay for a position into which he/she would like to enter which requires knowledge and expertise which h/she does not yet have

D. Outsider to Outsider:

1. a non-professional writing for a non-professional, general audience
2. examples: journalism (though sometimes the writer has experience in the given field he/she is covering, this is *often* not the case); Omni, etc.