

The Persuasion Power-Up: Mastering Ethos, Pathos, & Logos

Materials Needed:

- Computer with internet access
- Printer (for worksheets)
- Index cards or small pieces of paper (about 15-20)
- Markers or pens
- A timer (phone timer is perfect)
- "Ad Detective" Worksheet (template provided below)
- "Persuasive Pitch Planner" Worksheet (template provided below)

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

1. **Define** the three persuasive appeals: ethos, pathos, and logos.
2. **Identify** and analyze the use of ethos, pathos, and logos in real-world media (commercials).
3. **Apply** ethos, pathos, and logos to construct their own persuasive argument.

Standard Alignment:

EN8INF-II-10: Analyze persuasive techniques to support an argument (ethos, logos, pathos).

Lesson Activities

Part 1: The Warm-Up - The Art of Convincing (5 minutes)

Start with a fun conversation. Ask the student:

"Think about the last time you really, really wanted something and had to convince someone to let you have it or do it. Maybe it was a later bedtime, a new video game, or choosing what to have for dinner. How did you convince them? What did you say?"

Listen to their strategy. Point out how they might have used logic, made an emotional argument, or tried to show they were responsible. Explain that they were already using the secret tools of persuasion, and today they'll learn their official names and how to become a master at using them.

Part 2: Meet the Power Trio - Mini-Lesson (10 minutes)

Introduce the three appeals as if they are characters or superheroes with different powers. Keep it simple and memorable!

- **ETHOS (The Expert):** This is the appeal to credibility and character. It's about trust.
 - **Ask:** "Would you trust a medical diagnosis from your favorite YouTuber or from a doctor?"

Why?"

- **Key Idea:** We trust people who are experts, who are trustworthy, or who are respectable (like celebrities or doctors). This is Ethos.
- **PATHOS (The Heart):** This is the appeal to emotion. It's about making someone *feel* something.
 - **Ask:** "Think about those sad animal shelter commercials with the slow music. How do they make you feel? Do they make you want to help?"
 - **Key Idea:** Ads and arguments use happiness, fear, sadness, or excitement to connect with us emotionally. This is Pathos.
- **LOGOS (The Brain):** This is the appeal to logic and reason. It's about facts, numbers, and making sense.
 - **Ask:** "If a phone company said, 'Our plan gives you 20% more data for the same price,' what part of your brain are they talking to?"
 - **Key Idea:** Arguments that use statistics, data, facts, and a clear, logical structure are using Logos.

Part 3: Power-Up Sorting Game - Guided Practice (10 minutes)

Preparation: Before the lesson, write the following statements on separate index cards.

Statements for Cards:

- "As a dentist with 20 years of experience, I recommend this toothpaste." (Ethos)
- "If you don't act now, these adorable puppies may not find a home." (Pathos)
- "Our data shows that this car is 50% safer in a crash." (Logos)
- "The leading actor, Tom Hanks, endorses this product." (Ethos)
- "Imagine the joy on your child's face when they open this gift." (Pathos)
- "History has shown us that this method is effective." (Logos)
- "Don't be the only one without the latest gadget!" (Pathos - fear of missing out)
- "Based on the evidence, this is the only logical conclusion." (Logos)
- "I've been a loyal customer for 15 years, and I can tell you this company is reliable." (Ethos)

How to Play:

1. Create three "zones" on a table or the floor labeled ETHOS, PATHOS, and LOGOS.
2. Give the stack of cards to the student.
3. Set a timer for 2 minutes and challenge them to sort as many cards as they can into the correct piles.
4. When the time is up, review their choices together and discuss any that were tricky.

Part 4: Ad Detective - Application & Analysis (15 minutes)

Now, let's go on a hunt for these appeals in the wild!

1. Choose 2-3 short, engaging, and age-appropriate commercials from YouTube. Try to pick ones that clearly feature a dominant appeal. (Teacher's Note: Search for "funny Super Bowl commercials" for Logos/Pathos, "emotional commercials" for Pathos, and "tech commercials with experts" for Ethos. Be sure to pre-screen them.)
2. Give the student the "Ad Detective Worksheet."
3. For each commercial, have them fill out the sheet, identifying the main appeal used and explaining their evidence. Discuss their findings after each one.

Part 5: The Ultimate Persuasive Pitch - Creative Project (20 minutes)

This is the student's chance to show off their new persuasion powers!

The Challenge: "Your mission is to create a 1-2 minute verbal pitch to persuade me on a topic of your choice. You must use at least **TWO** of the three persuasive appeals."

Topic Ideas (let the student choose):

- Pitch an imaginary product you invented.
- Argue for a new privilege (e.g., a later bedtime, getting a pet, more screen time).
- Advocate for a cause you believe in (e.g., why we should recycle more, support a local charity).

Process:

1. Give the student the "Persuasive Pitch Planner" worksheet to brainstorm and structure their ideas.
2. Give them about 10-15 minutes to prepare their pitch.
3. Have them present their pitch to you with energy and enthusiasm!

Part 6: Debrief & Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

After the pitch, give positive feedback and then discuss the process:

- "Great job! Which two appeals did you decide to use? Why did you choose those?"
- "Which one do you think was the most effective part of your argument?"
- "Now that you know about ethos, pathos, and logos, where do you think you'll see them in your daily life?"

Assessment & Differentiation

- **Formative Assessment:** Success in the card-sorting game and the quality of reasoning on the "Ad Detective" worksheet will show if the student is grasping the concepts.
- **Summative Assessment:** The "Ultimate Persuasive Pitch" is the main assessment. Evaluate it based on:
 1. Did the student clearly state their argument?
 2. Did they successfully use at least two persuasive appeals?
 3. Could they explain their choices during the debrief?
- **Extension/Challenge:** For a more advanced challenge, ask the student to find an opinion article online or watch a short political speech and write a paragraph analyzing how the author blends all three appeals together.

Worksheet Templates

Ad Detective Worksheet

Name of Ad/Product: _____

1. What is the ad trying to get you to do or believe?

2. What is the MAIN persuasive appeal used? (Circle one)

ETHOS (The Expert) PATHOS (The Heart) LOGOS (The Brain)

3. Give evidence! How do you know? What did you see or hear that proves it?

(Example: It used sad music and showed lonely animals to make me feel sympathy.)

Persuasive Pitch Planner

My Goal: What do I want to persuade my audience to do or believe?

My Audience: _____

Brainstorming my Appeals:

- **How can I use ETHOS (Trust)?** (*Why should they listen to me? Am I responsible? Can I get an expert to back me up?*)
- **How can I use PATHOS (Emotion)?** (*What feeling do I want my audience to have? Happiness? Excitement? Sympathy?*)
- **How can I use LOGOS (Logic)?** (*What facts, numbers, or common-sense steps can I use to prove my point?*)

My Plan: Choose your two strongest appeals and write a key sentence for each.

1. Appeal #1 (_____): _____
2. Appeal #2 (_____): _____