

## Use Pathos and Ethos to Guide Research

**Brief:** In addition to support materials that rely on logos, public speakers should know when and how to incorporate support materials that reflect pathos and ethos.

**Learning Objective:** Understand when and how to apply pathos and ethos to guide the selection of effective support materials.

**Key Terms:**

- **Ethos:** A form of rhetoric in which the speaker invokes their authority, competence, or expertise in an attempt to persuade others that their view is correct.
- **Pathos:** A form of rhetoric in which the speaker uses strong emotions in an attempt to persuade an audience.

### What is Pathos?

Pathos represents an appeal to the audience's emotions. Pathos is a communication technique used most often in rhetoric (in which it is considered one of the three modes of persuasion, alongside ethos and logos), but also in literature, film, and other narrative art.

#### ***Support Materials that Demonstrate Pathos***

In order to hold your audience's attention for any period of time, an appeal to their logical mind isn't enough. To keep them engaged, you also need to appeal to their emotions. When used effectively, pathos can add depth to the body of your speech.

For example, if you're highlighting the gravity of an issue such as gun violence, a first-hand account of personal loss paired with statistics that shed light on the immensity of the problem could be a powerful combination.

### What is Ethos?

When your audience perceives you as having a strong moral character, as well as competence and credibility as a speaker, you are said to have strong ethos. Your audience's perception of your ethos is not fixed. Rather, ethos is something you cultivate throughout the phases of speech development and delivery. All of the support material choices you make for your speech can contribute positively to—or take away from—your audience's sense of your ethos.

#### ***Choose Credible Sources***

As a public speaker, you are responsible for choosing support material from among a wide range of sources. When you choose respectable sources with strong credibility, you strengthen

your credibility by association. On the other hand, when you choose a source that is unknown or one that has questionable credibility, you risk diminishing your credibility.

### ***Audience-Centered Choices***

As a speaker, you want to build a rapport with the audience so they leave with as good or a better impression of you than when you began your speech. Rapport occurs when two or more people are in sync because they feel similarly or relate well to each other.

Show your listeners that you're sincerely trying to make a connection by choosing support material that relates to what you know matters to them.

To build rapport with your audience throughout your speech:

1. Identify areas of common ground with your audience.
2. Choose a variety of support materials that reflect your shared beliefs, values, and interests.
3. Ensure that your support materials come from credible sources that they recognize, respect, and can identify with.

### **From Concept to Action**

Consider a speech topic that you've chosen or are considering for an upcoming assignment. Choose one main idea about this topic and conduct a quick internet search to identify a fact about this main idea. Once you've found your fact, consider what additional support materials you might choose that would add pathos to your presentation. Could examples, narratives, quotations, or images provide a good complement to your fact? Conduct a quick internet search to discover an example of each.

#### **OER TEXT SOURCES:**

"Build Credibility." Lumen Learning. <https://lumen.instructure.com/courses/218897/pages/linkedtext54168>. Accessed 20 April 2019. [CC BY-SA 3.0]

"Ethos." Wiktionary. <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/ethos>. Accessed 30 April 2019. [CC BY-SA 3.0]

"Pathos." Wiktionary. <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/pathos>. Accessed 30 April 2019. [CC BY-SA 3.0]