

Rhetoric



WHAT IS RHETORIC?

Rhetoric is “the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the use of figures of speech and other compositional techniques.”

RHETORICAL APPEALS

There are three main types of rhetorical appeals that speakers and writers make. It's more important to understand the concepts than to be able to name them.

Ethos

Ethos is an appeal to authority. The author can present details or evidence of any of the following to appeal to authority:

- experience
- moral character
- credentials
- accolades

Pathos

Pathos is an appeal to emotion. An author or speaker can effectively accomplish their goal by making their audience *feel* any one of a wide variety of emotions, including (but not limited to):

- sympathy
- sadness
- anger
- happiness
- pride
- fear

Logos

Logos is an appeal to reason and logic. It can be accomplished by supplying any of the following:

- facts
- statistics or data
- evidence
- rational and logical argument

MAIN IDEA, PURPOSE, AND TONE

These are three general characteristics of a text that you will be asked about in the multiple-choice section and that you will have to write about in the free-response section.

Main Idea

- Refers to the content of the passage
- Answers the question “*What* is this passage about?”

Purpose

- Related to Main Idea, but not the same
- Answers the question “*Why* did the author say [insert main idea here]?”

Tone

- Refers to the author’s attitude about their subject
- As you read through the passage, circle any extreme words, and look for images and associations.

On any general questions in the multiple-choice section, look out for answer choices that oversimplify the passage, or push the ideas from the passage to a more extreme conclusion or position than the author takes.

WHAT IT MEANS

Rhetoric is an interaction between a speaker or an author and an audience. What it looks like can vary based three important factors:

- Who the speaker is
 - What kind of authority or expertise does the speaker have?
- Who the audience is
 - What is the relationship between speaker and audience?
- What the situation is
 - How formal is the setting, or “rhetorical occasion”?

IN OTHER WORDS...

Ethos is about the speaker.

Pathos is about the audience.

Logos is about the argument itself.