

The Rhetorical Triangle: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos *a supplemental resource to the Rhetoric Support Document*

Rhetorical Appeal: A rhetorical appeal is a strategy that a writer, author, or speaker uses to achieve a specific purpose. Rhetorical appeals can be present in the written word, spoken word, and in visual images. The rhetorical appeals are *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*.

Students in 8th grade and English 1 have built knowledge around argument and rhetorical appeals. Students in 8th grade are now analyzing *how* or *why* an author or speaker uses one or more rhetorical appeals, while students in English 1 are evaluating an author's or speaker's use of rhetoric, to include *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. Since *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* interact with one another, teachers should consider introducing students to the *Rhetorical Triangle* to provide students with a visual image of how the three appeals work together. While the *Rhetorical Triangle* is not required within the grade-level indicators, teachers may find it to be a useful tool for instruction.

Overarching Standard ELA.AOR.5: Evaluate and critique how an author uses words, phrases, and text structures to craft text.

| ELA.6.AOR.5.3 | ELA.7.AOR.5.3 | ELA.8.AOR.5.3 | ELA.E1.AOR.5.3 |
|---|---|---|--|
| Trace the development of an author's argument while identifying the types of reasoning used and/or the rhetorical appeal of ethos, pathos, or logos in an informational text. | Trace the development of an author's argument while explaining the types of reasoning and/or the rhetorical appeal of ethos, pathos, or logos in an informational text. | Trace the development of an author's argument while analyzing the types of reasoning and/or rhetorical appeals used in an informational text. | Analyze an author's argument while evaluating the effectiveness of the types of reasoning and/or the rhetoric used in an informational text. |

The Rhetorical Triangle

The rhetorical triangle serves as an easy way to illustrate that ethos, pathos, and logos work together in a text and are dependent on one another. While, ideally, the three appeals should work in balance, some authors or speakers may favor one type over the others depending on the purpose of the text and the audience. *Logos*, which always appears at the top of the triangle, is the most important part of an argument because it appeals to logic.

[Access the Ethos, Pathos, Logos Supplement for more information.](#)

