

Video Title: Persuasive Techniques in Advertising
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Narrator: The Art of Rhetoric: Persuasive Techniques in Advertising. . . Persuasive techniques appear in a variety of media, from a high school debate to a built-in ad on a mobile app to a brightly lit billboard on the street. Regardless of the mode of communication, the goal often remains the same: convince the audience of your point of view. That point of view may be political, informative, or simply, “Hey buy this product instead of that one!” Authors of a written persuasive essay use similar strategies. They make emotional appeals, build credibility and trust, and use logic and reason, all to convince the reader that their perspective is believable and true. Greek philosopher Aristotle used three terms to describe these rhetorical strategies: pathos, logos, and ethos. Not every advertisement will use all three of these techniques, but most use at least two to persuade the consumer to invest in a product or idea. We’ll first start by taking a look at advertisements that feature pathos. An argument using pathos will attempt to evoke an emotional response in the audience. Before we get into advertising, let’s envision this as a persuasive essay.

Student: Imagine that you failed a math test because your school’s strict anti-cell phone policy kept you from using your calculator app or that your sister gives birth to your baby nephew but you have no idea because your teacher won’t let you check your text messages. . .

Narrator: Notice how this essay attempts to evoke two emotions: the fear of failure and the anxiety of missing out on important news in order to persuade you. Now, let’s take a look at how this could work in advertising. Notice how the following ads want you to associate happiness or fun with their product.

[Advertisements: The first ad for Dave & Buster’s shows two young men and a woman cheering while playing a video game. In the second ad, excited children enjoy a birthday party at the restaurant.]

Narrator: (Moving on to a MacDonald’s ad.) In fact, with the Happy Meal, it’s right there in the name.

[Advertisement: An ad for a Happy Meal shows a mother smiling at her daughter who is holding a red Happy Meal container. The ad slogan reads “Happy to the Core.”]

Narrator: These food-related ads have a pretty good idea of how you can satisfy your hunger.

[Advertisement: An ad for fast food shows video clips of various people enjoying fries and drinks.]

[Advertisement: A Miracle Whip mayonnaise ad shows a bearded man seated in a diner. He dumps a mound of coleslaw on his burger, smiles, and starts eating while the cook looks on. Voiceover: “Have your next burger with a side of awesome, with a one of a kind creamy blend of sweet and tangy. Miracle Whip and proud of it.”]

Narrator: Some ads attempt to tug at the heartstrings. What's a more effective way to sell Google, showing you how to look up a recipe for meatloaf or...

[Advertisement: A Google ad follows. (Music.) A computer screen shows someone googling the following phrases: "study abroad in Paris," "cafes near the Louvre," "impress a French girl," "long distance relationship advice," "jobs in Paris," "churches in Paris," and "how to assemble a crib." The ad ends with a baby crying and the words "search on."]

Narrator: How touching. One of the most obvious uses of pathos is to claim that a product can make you more attractive, such as in this ad for AXE body spray.

[Advertisement: A young woman opens her front door and finds a monster standing in the doorway. She rips off his arm, grabs him around the neck, and kisses him while she holds a can of AXE body spray in her hand. The ad ends with the words "THE AXE EFFECT."]

Narrator: Advertisers also know you have emotional investments in your own health.

[Advertisement: An ad for Kellogg's cereal shows a glass of milk and a bowl of cereal against a red background. The ad text reads, "Cereal and Milk/Protein to help you rebuild/Grains to help you recharge".]

[Advertisement: People enjoying themselves at an outdoor party chat while passing around a bag of Kashi chips. Talking to the TV viewers, a young man says, "So you can have your chips and eat well too."]

Narrator: Some products promise to provide relief from pain.

[Advertisement: A glowing pill approaches a thick rock wall shaped like the word "pain" and crashes through it. A package of Advil appears on the screen. Voiceover: "Stop pain before it starts. Nothing works faster. New fast acting Advil."]

Narrator: Or to help others avoid pain.

[Advertisement: Someone sings, "In the arms of the angels. . ." A woman has her arm around a sad-eyed dog lying on a towel. Voiceover: "Every single hour in BC (British Columbia), an animal is violently abused."]

Narrator: Ugh, I can't watch this one, let's move on. The second persuasive technique we'll talk about is logos. Logos is a logical appeal. An argument using logos uses logic and reason to persuade the audience. Logos uses statistics, facts, what a product does, how much it costs, simple logic and information. Notice the reference to very specific statistics in this excerpt from a student essay.

Student: Studies have shown that a student GPA increases by an average of 1.2 points per semester when schools lift the ban on cell phone usage.

Narrator: This commercial for Kashi tells you what's in it. Notice the fine print.

[Advertisement: The Kashi ad begins with a close up of chip batter being stirred in a mortar. In the next scene, chips fall from the top to the bottom of the screen. The fine print reads, "3 g protein, 3.5 g fat/serving/not a significant source of protein."]

Narrator: The Dole website contains nutrition facts.

[Advertisement: The ad shows a bottle of Dole Orange Peach Mango juice against a background of fresh fruit. The graphic contains the following facts: 120 calories, 100% juice, 100% vitamin C. The ad also lists the juice ingredients and provides a link to nutrition facts.]

Narrator: The Arm & Hammer toothpaste commercial shares what the product does and adds a little website information for you also.

[Advertisement: The Arm & Hammer ad shows a computer-generated image of teeth and gums. White bubbles and the words "baking soda" fall from the top of the screen and land on the teeth. As the toothpaste removes the plaque, the phrase "REMOVES UP TO 5 TIMES MORE PLAQUE" fills the screen. The scene changes to a shot of an Arm & Hammer toothpaste box. The words "try it free" appear above the box.]

Narrator: This Lexus Hybrid commercial contains details and statistics.

[Advertisement: A red Lexus Hybrid zooms through San Francisco while facts about the car appear above it. Voiceover: "An estimated 42 miles per gallon, have saved nearly 300 million gallons of gas, are up to 90% recyclable and include plant based-materials, and are on their sixth generation of technology."]

Narrator: The final persuasive technique we'll examine is ethos. Ethos is an appeal to credibility. An argument using ethos attempts to convince the audience that the creator of the message can be trusted. Again, let's look at a sample of persuasive writing and see how this connects. Notice how the author here is attempting to establish her credibility by proving that we can trust her.

Student: This is my fourth year at Madison High School. I've been the president of the National Honor Society, captain of the technology committee, and very active in show choir.

Narrator: Ethos in advertising is often demonstrated by the use of experts to establish credibility. This vintage ad lets us know that hospitals trust Pepto-Bismol, so you should too.

[Advertisement: A cartoon shows a man getting out of bed and bending over. "Stomach upset, stomach upset, stomach upset!" The man gets an idea. The scene changes to a picture of a bottle of Pepto-Bismol with the words "hospital tested" across it. (Music.) "It's time for Pepto-Bismol, time for hospital tested Pepto-Bismol." A man dressed in a suit and seated at a desk says, "Yes, and actual hospital tests prove that Pepto-Bismol works where soda and

alkalizers fail.”]

Narrator: The website assures us that Tylenol is doctor recommended.

[Advertisements: The first webpage for Tylenol gives information on the “Tylenol Future Care Scholarship.” The photo on the page shows a student nurse using a stethoscope on a patient. The next webpage entitled “Get Relief Responsibly,” shows a photograph of a healthcare professional holding a pill bottle while talking with a patient.]

Narrator: But of course, the experts don’t always get it right.

[Advertisement: An ad for Viceroy’s cigarettes begins with the slogan: “Viceroy’s filter the smoke.” The cartoon under the slogan shows a cigarette package and a dentist holding a raised dental instrument. The dentist says, “As your dentist, I would recommend Viceroy’s.”]

Narrator: Sometimes an expert in an advertisement are real people giving real testimonials.

[Advertisement: An ad for cat litter follows. A woman in a white lab coat says, “That’s real cat urine, and we gathered a group of cat owners to see what they smell.” An assistant puts the soiled cat litter in a glass and hands it to a panel of actual cat owners. Comments from the cat owners include, “I don’t smell this at all,” “Wow!” and “I don’t smell any urine at all.”]

Narrator: Febreze tells us that real people, not actors, experience how their products works.

[Advertisement: In the first scene, people at a house party mingle and dance. In the next scene, a dirty kitchen is sprayed with a can of Febreze while an announcer says, “The next day we sprayed Febreze Air Effect and let in real people.” Blindfolded participants come into the kitchen and say, “I’d say it was very pleasant. Flowers everywhere.” After taking off the blindfolds participants remark, “Ahh!! Febreze did a really good job. Impressive.” The announcer ends the commercial by saying, “Febreze Air Effect eliminates tough odors for good.”]

Narrator: Sometimes ethos in an advertisement doesn’t come from real people or experts, it comes from celebrities. Simply associating a celebrity with a product can convince people to make that choice. Tim Tebow doesn’t design cell phones, Robin Williams doesn’t make Snicker bars, and Taylor Swift might not even drink Diet Coke, but their simple presence in advertising is made to persuade you.

[Advertisement: Actress Jennifer Aniston walks through her bedroom and says, “Radiant skin, a good night’s sleep, and Aveeno.”]

[Advertisement: A man seated in a cubicle looks up with annoyance as his underwear tag starts talking, “Alright!! It’s time to get this party started. (Music.) MJ in the housey-house.” Sport star Michael Jordan enters and walks up to the man. He tears off his tag and hands it to Michael

Jordan who tosses it in a shredder. Voiceover: “Tags are annoying, so we got rid of them. New Hanes tag-less underwear. Go tag-less.”]

Narrator: . . .pathos, logos, and ethos, defined by Aristotle over 2,000 years ago and still found in all modes of persuasion.