

ARTIFICIAL SUPPORT

In argumentation and other forms of discourse, a reader may encounter a thesis (claim), natural forms of support (such as evidence and/or testimony), and artificial forms of support.

While natural forms of support include hard data obtained scientifically (or through instrumentation), artificial forms of support include every other technique of persuasion.

Since the term, artificial, implies “man-made,” one must assume that any man-made form of support could be considered an artificial form of support.

Typically, anything used to convince the reader, which is “man-made,” can be condensed into three main categories (or what we call rhetorical appeals):

Ethos

Pathos

Logos

Ethos refers to the creditability or ethical character of a writer.

Pathos refers to the emotions activated by a writer in his discourse.

Logos refers to any logical construction, belief, assumption, belief, statistic, or pattern of reasoning used by a writer.

Here are two examples of artificial support in action:

EX:

Claim: John deserves a toy.

John (a six-year old) wants a toy.

His mother says no.

John states that he has been a good boy and deserves a toy. [ethos]

His mother says no.

John says that all the other little kids around him have toys; therefore, he should have a toy too.

[logos]

His mother says no.

John starts crying and sobbing uncontrollably, and says his mother is a bad mother. [pathos]

And, his mother, feeling sorry for him and embarrassed decides to buy him a toy.

Notice how John has no physical evidence to use. However, he is able to establish his own credibility, his own reason for having the toy (although not a law or rule), and then uses crying and name calling as a method of persuading his mother.

EX:

Claim: Mr. Arnold is innocent.

Mr. Arnold, the Janitor, is accused of stealing a roll of dollars from a box in Mr. Phelps's office.

Mr. Arnold tells Mr. Phelps that for the last twenty years nothing had been stolen while Arnold had worked for Phelps. Arnold asks: Why would I be guilty for something like this now? [logos]

Mr. Arnold states that he is a model employee, who is never late to work and works hard to support his wife and children [ethos]

Mr. Arnold asks Mr. Phelps: "How would you feel if you were in my shoes, Mr. Arnold? How would you feel if someone accused you a petty crime when you were a hard working person?" [pathos & logos]

Notice how appeals may be somewhat combined to achieve a desired effect on the audience.