

## PATHOS

Pathos (or *the emotional appeal*) is a form of artificial support and is considered a common appeal in argumentative writing. Pathos refers to how we activate or induce emotions with words, sentences, passages, paragraphs, or through an entire document. Some of the emotions activated by pathos: anger, hate, fear, apathy, happiness, security, pride, sadness, desire, etc.

### STRATEGIC PATHOS FOR COLLEGE WRITING

Some fundamental ways to instill pathos in your text:

1. Use imagery or visual images (or use words describing something with emotive properties).

EX:

If we were writing a story in support of a paper about supporting Nuclear Proliferation (that is, cutting back the amount of nuclear weapons in the world), we might write something like this:

Imagine, one morning, you wake up. You step out of bed. You look out your window, and you see a brilliant blinding light. You are blinded by the site of a nuclear detonation, and your vision is lost completely. Seconds later, as you begin to rub your eyes, you feel an intense force pushing you to the ground. Then, not one second later, you feel your flesh start to burn. First, you feel the pain of blistering on the skin, then you feel the flesh begin to crisp. And, just before you are able to scream, the air is sucked out of your lungs, and you are engulfed in a massive field of heat. As you start to move your arms around, you feel searing pain and then you are vaporized into tiny ashes. Could you imagine a fate like this one for yourself? What about for your children?

2. Use stories or examples or analogies, which contain emotive properties

EX: (To demonstrate heroism and courage)

If we were writing a paper about heroism, we might mention the story of the US-Somalia conflict where the Blackhawk helicopter was shot down and the ensuing struggle the U.S. Army faced in recovering the fallen soldiers. We might mention the story of the U.S. Army medic who braved a cross-fire of automatic machine gunfire to retrieve packs of plasma (blood) for a fellow soldier who was dying. He ran into the crossfire unarmed, not once but three times.

Or, we might mention the two soldiers who left the safety of their own helicopter to stand and fight on the ground to cover two wounded men who were about to be taken by hundreds of armed and angry Somalilanders. As they fought the rabid crowd, they found themselves in peril then killed by hundreds of shots by the angry mob. The bodies of the dead soldiers were dragged through the streets of the city as individuals pounced on and beat their lifeless bodies. These soldiers knew that they may not have had a chance; however, they did not want a fellow soldier to die on the ground alone.

3. Use Emotionally-Charged Subject Matter in your discussions. Concepts/Ideas/Items (e.g. infants, birth, illness, death, etc.) which consistently maintain strong emotional

responses (e.g., fear, anger, happiness, sadness, etc.) may help to induce strong emotions. Consider things/events/people which everyone has insight or experience with....

EX:

When you wake up in the morning, do you ever think about being grateful for simple things, like having a bed, a home, food, and decent health care. Well, little Maria, only 4 years old, lives in a small shack without power, running water, or even enough money for one meal a day. With your donations, Aventine Charities can make a difference. Just one dollar per day will help to ensure that Maria will never go hungry.... Aventine Charities provides families in need with clothing, money for decent housing, and food.

Note: If the Charity is a general charity (catering to adults and children), then why use a child? Why make the comparison of you to a child in need? Pathos.

Children appear more vulnerable. In most cases, no one wishes ill on a child. People may be more apt to give money/donate to charities helping children.

Such an artifact may induce guilt, sadness, or evoke the necessity to take action.

4. Deity talk. Using fear of religious persecution and/or using fear of religious deities can be emotive. Likewise, using religion or the invocation of deities to raise a person's mood can also be considered emotive.

EX:

Almighty Dog will strike you down if you disobey his commandments.  
The power of Dog will open the heavens and lead you to paradise.

5. Use Emotionally-Charged Language as needed (e.g. vary Harsh Word Choices/Soft Word Choices when appropriate)

EX:

You can say something simple like "War is difficult on people," which does not convey much emotion. Or, you can say that "War is hell, and people die horribly. People are raped and killed; homes are burned with people inside; and, a great deal of blood is left behind."

Note how the specifics added to the second example help to solidify the main idea more effectively (more emotionally).

EX:

If you call someone an expletive, how do you think they would react? They would be Angry and/or outraged.... You can almost rely on a person's natural reaction to such engagements.

On the note of word choice, consider the artifacts below:

### WORD CHOICE AND PATHOS

Here are two examples of how pathos is used in everyday life (this artifact was used by a coach to inspire his team):

EX: *101 Ways to Praise a Child*

Wow - Way To Go - Super - You're Special - Outstanding - Excellent - Great - Good - Neat - Well Done - Remarkable - I Knew You Could Do It - I'm Proud Of You - Fantastic - Super Star - Nice Work - Looking Good - You're On Top Of It - Beautiful - Now You're Flying - You're Catching On - Now You've Got It - You're Incredible - Bravo - You're Fantastic - Hurray For You - You're On Target - You're On Your Way - How Nice - How Smart - Good Job - That's Incredible - Hot Dog - Dynamic - You're Beautiful - You're Unique - Nothing Can Stop You Now - Good For You - I like You - You're A Winner - Remarkable Job - Beautiful Work - Spectacular - You're Spectacular - You're A Darling - You're Precious - Great Discovery - You've Discovered The Secret - You Figured It Out - Fantastic Job - Hip, Hip, Hurray - Bingo - Magnificent - Marvelous - Terrific - You're Important - Phenomenal - You're Sensational - Super Work - Creative Job - Super Job - Fantastic Job - Exceptional Performance - You're A Real Trooper - You Are Responsible - You Are Exciting - You Learned It Right - What An Imagination - What A Good Listener - You Are Fun - You're Growing Up - You Tried Hard - You Care - Beautiful Sharing - Outstanding Performance - You're A Good Friend - I Trust You - You're Important - You Mean A Lot To Me - You Make Me Happy - You Belong - You've Got A Friend - You Make Me Laugh - You Brighten My Day - I Respect You - You Mean The World To Me - That's Correct - You're A Joy - You're A Treasure - You're Wonderful - You're Perfect - Awesome - A Plus Job - You're The Best - A Big Hug - A Big Kiss - I Love You!

Notice the structures which are used to motivate and praise children in this example. Now, seriously, think about how language in an argument can be used much in the same way or even to hurt/harm someone or something.

How about this?

EX: *101 Ways to Scold a Person*

You Piece Of Crap – You Are Absolutely Worthless – I Have Known Bird Droppings with Higher IQ's – You Did This Wrong – You Suck – You Are Worthless – You Aren't Worth Anything – You Can't Follow The Directions – Are You an Idiot? – Are You Stupid? – That's Dumb – You're Dumb – You're Stupid – That's Idiotic – You're Foolish – You No Brainer – You Can't Do It – You Can't Do Anything – You Are a Moron – You Are A Idiot – Give Up – Give It Up - Don't Even Try – You Don't Mean Crap to Me – Where Is Your Brain? – Horrific – Terrible – Bad – Poor – You Fail – You're Fired – Suck It Up – No Whining – Beastly – Shameful – Awful – Atrocious – Deplorable – Horrific – That's Unacceptable – Brainless – How Dense Are You? – You Dope – Dopey – Unintelligent – Moronic – That's So Naïve – Are You Ignorant? – You Imbecile – Are You Mentally Deficient? – That's The Most Empty-Headed Thing Ever – You're a Dork – You Dork – That's Like A Screen Door On A Submarine – That's Ugly – You're Ugly – You Smell – Where Is The Brain Power Here? – Bonehead... and so forth (the rest are explicit).