

Rhetorical Appeals in the Visual Realm

In English 101, students learn about the rhetorical appeals, a concept articulated by Aristotle in *The Rhetoric*. These appeals, very briefly, are ethos (an appeal through the character of the speaker), pathos (an appeal to the concerns of the audience) and logos (an appeal through the reason of the argument). A common lesson in teaching these appeals, often used as an introduction, is to look at advertisements and consider how they use each of these appeals. For instance, a typical car ad appeals to a sense of adventure (pathos), to reliability (pathos but also ethos in that the manufacturer is credible), to efficiency and good gas mileage (pathos and also logos, in the sense of presenting the "facts" about the car), and so on. Alternatively, students might be introduced to the terms and asked to bring in visual examples of their own, putting them on the lookout for how these appeals work in the media.