

# Ethos

Ethos = Ethical.

An argument that uses the ethical appeal seeks to establish a character.

Ethos creates quick connections between the audience and the argument.

Such connections are built on the following ethical questions: Should we pay attention to this person? Can we trust this person? Do we want to trust this person?

Look at the following two people:





Who is this infamous person?

What does/did each person do to make him an ethical representation? Which audiences would each of these men appeal? Why?

1. Should we pay attention to them? Why or why not and in what situation?

2. Can we trust them? In which situations can we trust them?

3. Do we want to trust them? In which situations can we trust them?

These are questions we should ask when we rely on other's opinions to shape our opinions.

Arguments based on character depend on one important word—**TRUST**.

People accept arguments from trustworthy people and we **TRUST** them because of reputations.

Basically, **THREE** components make up **ETHOS**: **trustworthiness**, **authority**, and **unselfish or clear motives**.

We turn to certain people because they have established the three components. They have built their backgrounds and authority and are deemed trustworthy.

## Ethos–Credibility

Most speeches begin with a joke or some funny story. These put listeners at ease, thereby making a connection to the speaker. You **MUST** respect the audience.

Yet, credibility is established by making sensible claims and supporting them with evidence. This shows your knowledge and builds your credibility.

Would you ask me a questions about math? Why not? Would you ask Mr. S about *The Great Gatsby*? Why not? The answers are obvious because we have established credibility over many years.

Believe it or not, reliable sources in a research paper and correct spelling and mechanics establish credibility. Even though the claims are solid, if you present your findings in a slovenly way, you have ruined your ethos as an arguer.

How do you feel about people on fb who rant about other's shortcomings and the people who posted misspell words and forgo all the rules of punctuation and grammar? Exactly...

## Ethos–Authority

The easiest way to establish authority is to indicate to the audience you have experienced this. Personal stories are the easiest way to make this connection.

Titles attached to names also establish authority: Mr.S, AP Calculus teacher, ...

People are going to accept authority on a topic if they know the person is an expert. Uncle Bob who works on cars at Sears is not the person to ask about rocket science—unless he has a degree in rocket science.

## Ethos–Motives

Be honest with the audience. Be up front about associations with groups and people. If the audience discovers you are associating with nefarious or suspicious groups or you have ulterior motives, your credibility will be tarnished.

Yes, fb is a legitimate ethical reference. Think about your fb (if you have one) and what you have presented to people about you. Do you have any pictures or posts that could make people doubt your ethics?



## Ethos–Your Turn

You will be given a person and several questions to answer. As you research this person, think about the ethics of this person.

**CAN I TRUST SOMEBODY THAT SAYS**



**DON'T TRUST ANYBODY ?**

Hmmmm....

[memecenter.com](http://memecenter.com)

