

Rhetorical Analysis: Ethos, Pathos & Logos in Persuasive Discourse



Name: _____ Date: _____

Read the rhetorical speech excerpt below. Identify the classical appeals (Ethos, Pathos, Logos) employed to persuade the assembly.

An Appeal for the Sanctuary of the Commons

Constructed practice speech: the speaker and stated credentials are fictional. Evaluate the rhetorical appeal rather than treating the credentials as verified evidence.

Members of the Council: For thirty years, I have served as chief hydrology researcher for this valley, cataloging every tributary that feeds our reservoir. My technical findings have been independently peer-reviewed by the National Academy of Hydrology (Ethos). The statistical truth is indisputable: our aquifer levels have diminished by 42% over the past seven seasons, while per-capita industrial consumption has surged by 150% (Logos).

If we refuse to enact immediate watershed conservation, the children of this district will soon wake to dry faucets and barren soil. Imagine looking into the eyes of your daughters and sons and confessing that we squandered their fundamental right to life-giving water for short-term corporate expediency (Pathos). Reason demands that we act decisively today, not when the final well runs dry.

1. When the speaker cites thirty years of personal field research and peer-reviewed endorsement by the National Academy of Hydrology, which rhetorical appeal is being primarily established?

- A. Pathos, by generating profound pity and sadness
- B. Ethos, by demonstrating seasoned professional expertise, ethical integrity, and scientific credibility
- C. Satiric irony intended to mock uneducated listeners
- D. False dichotomy fallacies designed to mislead voters

2. Which detail from the excerpt serves as the clearest example of LOGOS (logical appeal through empirical data)?

- A. 'Imagine looking into the eyes of your daughters and sons...'
- B. '...our aquifer levels have diminished by 42%... while per-capita industrial consumption has surged by 150%'
- C. 'For thirty years, I have served as chief hydrology researcher...'
- D. '...the final well runs dry.'

3. What is the primary rhetorical function of evoking the image of 'children waking to dry faucets' and 'looking into the eyes of your daughters and sons'?

- A. It provides a legal definition of municipal property rights.
- B. It leverages Pathos by tapping into parental protective instincts, moral guilt, and emotional empathy.
- C. It proves that children consume more water than factories.
- D. It changes the subject to an unrelated family matter.