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## Practicing Ethos, Pathos and Logos

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Rhetoric Unit  
Practicing Ethos, Pathos and Logos

## **PRACTICING ETHOS, PATHOS AND LOGOS**

### **ABSTRACT:**

This is a light-hearted follow-up activity to an introduction to the three rhetorical modes, ethos, pathos and logos. Designed for sophomores, though adaptable, this activity asks students to find creative ways to use the three modes to make an absurd case.

### **COMMON CORE STANDARDS:**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2d Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of a topic.

RI.9-10.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

### **PROCEDURE:**

Once the students have acquired a working understanding of ethos, pathos and logos, this activity, which can be accomplished in 40 minutes, solidifies that understanding through practice. The lesson works best if the students are paired off, as that seems to stimulate imaginative responses (and a great deal of laughter). One at a time, I present three scenarios, and ask the teams to create a persuasive response, using all three rhetorical modes. The scenarios are these:

Scenario 1: Persuade your parents to let you spend an unchaperoned week-end at a cottage in Wisconsin with a member of the opposite sex and two other sophomore couples from our school.

Scenario 2: Persuade your parents to buy you a \$500 pair of athletic shoes. [Note: You are not an athlete.]

Scenario 3: Your eleven-year-old brother has \$30 in his piggy bank. Without an explanation of your need for the money, persuade him to give it to you.

I give the students 7 or 8 minutes to concoct a persuasive scheme, and then ask for volunteers to report their ideas. The other students in the class are then asked to identify the three rhetorical modes. Then on to the next scenario.

**MATERIALS:**

Happily, this activity requires absolutely nothing.