



Persuading

Overview

This lesson introduces students to the art of persuasion. First, they read about and discuss the three types of persuasion: *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*. Then students prepare two-minute persuasive talks on why the issue that they have chosen to address in CAP is important. Finally, in pairs, students present and critique one another's talks.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain the basic persuasive techniques of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*.
- Determine whether hypothetical arguments use *logos*, *ethos*, or *pathos*.
- Create a two-minute persuasive talk on why a policy issue is important.
- Critique a persuasive presentation.

Preparation & Materials

- Before this lesson, tell students that they will be creating a short talk on why their issue is important and to bring any information or material they may need to create such a talk.
- [Handout A: The Three Basic Techniques of Persuasion](#)—1 per student

Procedure

I. Focus Discussion

A. Explain that through their civic actions, students are trying to influence policy and to be successful in this, they will need to persuade people to do things.

B. Hold a discussion by asking students: When was the last time you tried to persuade someone to do something you wanted them to do? What techniques did you use? Write students' responses on the board. (Since techniques vary depending on who you are trying to persuade and what you are trying to persuade them to do, use these prompts if students do not immediately come up with ideas: How might you persuade a friend to go somewhere when the friend is reluctant to go? How might you persuade your parents to let you go somewhere? How might you persuade a teacher to change an assignment?)

II. Reading and Discussion—The Three Basic Techniques of Persuasion

A. Distribute [Handout A: The Three Basic Techniques of Persuasion](#). Ask students to read the handout and look for what the three techniques are.

B. When students finish reading, hold a discussion using the questions on the handout.

1. What are *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*? Which, if any, of the three do you think is most important in making a persuasive appeal? Why?

2. Look at the examples below. Which type of persuasion is each an example of?

a. I have lived in this community my entire life and served as the head of the school board for the last four years. I can assure you that the dropout problem deeply affects our community.

b. More than 50 percent of all high school freshman in our community do not graduate. Dropouts earn much less than high school graduates and are more likely to require government services. If we want to improve our community's future, we should do something about the dropout problem.

c. Let me tell you about John Smith. When he was in high school, he was having trouble keeping up. No special help was available for him. He thought school wasn't for him, and he dropped out. Today, John is without a job and has little hope of getting one.

C. Refer to the students' arguments on the board. Ask students to classify these as *logos*, *pathos*, *ethos*, or some combination of these.

III. Paired Activity—Two-Minute Talk

A. Tell students that it can be helpful to have a presentation ready at a moment's notice. Tell them that many people have what are called "elevator talks" prepared. Explain that these are short persuasive talks that let others know who you are and why they should care about your issue. Tell them that they are going to prepare and practice a two-minute talk on why their issue is important. Tell them to try to include the tips under *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos* in their talks. Give them time to prepare.

B. Pair students up and have them practice and critique each other's talk.

IV. Debrief

A. Ask students:

- Did your talks incorporate *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*? Which was the most difficult to include? Why?
- Where might you use these persuasive talks? How might they be modified to make them appropriate for various audiences?
- Why is it important to build support when you are trying to influence policy?
- What type of persuasive argument are you most skilled at? What type do you most need to develop?

B. After completing this lesson, have students return to the Citizenship Brainstorm, identifying and adding to the lists.