Defining Emotional Appeal

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	WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will explore emotional appeals in greater depth. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Emotional Appeal Defined
2. The Purpose of an Emotional Appeal
3. Examples of Emotional Appeals

1. Emotional Appeal Defined

Pathos represents an appeal to the audience's emotions. Pathos is a communication technique used most often in rhetoric (where it is considered one of the three modes of persuasion, alongside ethos and logos), and in literature, film, and other narrative art.

Emotional appeal can be accomplished in a multitude of ways:

- By a metaphor or storytelling, common as a hook
- By a general passion in the delivery
- By an overall emotion
- By the sympathies of the speech or writing as determined by the audience

The pathos of a speech or writing is only ultimately determined by the audience.

2. The Purpose of an Emotional Appeal

An emotional appeal is directed to sway an audience member's emotions and uses the manipulation of the recipient's emotions rather than valid logic to win an argument.

An emotional appeal uses emotions as the basis of an argument's position without factual evidence that logically supports the major ideas endorsed by the presenter. In an emotional appeal, persuasive language is used to develop the foundation of an appeal to emotion-based arguments instead of facts. Therefore, the validity of the premises that establish such an argument does not prove to be verifiable.

Emotional appeal is a **logical fallacy**, whereby a debater attempts to win an argument by trying to get an emotional reaction from the opponent and audience. It is generally characterized by the use of loaded

language and concepts (God, country, and apple pie being good concepts; drugs and crime being bad ones).

In debating terms, emotional appeals are often effective as a rhetorical device, but are generally considered naive or dishonest as a logical argument, since they often appeal to the prejudices of listeners rather than offer a sober assessment of a situation.

📄 **TERM TO KNOW**

Logical Fallacy
A fallacy; a clearly defined error in reasoning used to support or refute an argument, excluding simple unintended mistakes.

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3. Examples of Emotional Appeals

Children are more often than not toddled out as an appeal to emotion. From pictures of starving children to motivate people to give to charity to using them as any excuse to ban things that children shouldn't even be aware of (e.g., guns), they are repeatedly paraded in front of audiences to appeal to their emotional protective instincts, often overriding anyone's sense of rationality.

↪ EXAMPLE "For the children" or "think of the children" as emotional appeals have been used with success in passing political motions such as Proposition Hate in California.

As with children, cute animals override most people's logic. Even if the pictures of animal testing put out by PETA are 50 years out of date, they still provoke an emotional response rather than a reasoned one when trying to assess cruelty in animal testing.

☑	SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that **the purpose of an emotional appeal** is to use the manipulation of emotions rather than valid logic to win an argument. Emotional appeal is thus a logical fallacy, whereby a debater attempts to win an argument by trying to get an emotional reaction from the opponent and audience. In debating terms, emotional appeals are often effective as a rhetorical device, but are generally considered naive or dishonest as a logical argument, since they often appeal to the prejudices of listeners rather than offer a sober assessment of a situation. Pictures of children and animals are common **examples of emotional appeals**.

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appeal-305-5821/

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