

# Technical Writing as Persuasion

## What is Technical Writing?

- Ability to write about technical information in a way that your intended audience can understand and use easily.
- Technical writing is an audience-centered means of communication that provides a reader with clear and easy access to information.
- NOT academic writing.
- Does not contain a strict format.
- Must be able to adapt to different audiences and their needs.

## Types of Technical Documents

- End-User Documentation
- Product Manuals
- Assembly Guides
- User Help Functions
- Technical Books
- Marketing Content
- Case Studies
- Brochures
- Application materials

## Why is it Important?

- It saves times
- Help you develop effective, persuasive documents of various types
- Aids others in understanding by explaining something or some process
- Help you meet your audience's expectations
- Improve your professional profile
- **Can you think of any other reasons people would want to know how to do this effectively?**

## Rhetoric

- Aristotle defined rhetoric as “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion”
  - Purdue Owl Rhetoric: any communication used to modify the perspectives of others.
- Yes, technical writing is specific and to the point. However, using rhetoric (persuasion) mixes facts with reasoning to motivate readers.

## Ethos

As a writer you need to be aware of how your audience perceives you -- your Ethos.

- Ethos is sense author gives audience of themselves as being competent/fair/authorities
  - Trustworthiness
  - Creditability
  - Reliability
  - Your authority
  - Your competence
  - Your professionalism
  - Fairness

## Communicator: Working Your Ethos

### Ways to improve Ethos

- Convincing arguments
- Use of adequate evidence and research
- Awareness of your audience's needs
- Professional presentation
- This video shows an author using an ethical appeal  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QuB8hkJwZk>

## Pathos

Pathos is the appeal the audience's feelings and beliefs. It does not matter if it is positive or negative.

When considering your audience you need to determine:

- What they already know (experiences or assumptions)
- What they are interested in knowing
- What they need to know

## Logos

- Logos is an appeal to the audience's ability to reason or logic.
- A document or message may have one or more purposes:
  - To persuade
  - To inform
  - Demonstrative speeches (How to)
  - To amuse, please, or entertain
- The ultimate purpose of workplace writing is to effect positive action\* and improve relations between people.

## The Document

A document is structured according to a genre:

- Memos, Reports, Power Point Presentations, Resumes, Letter of Application, etc.

A technical document might contain:

- Arguments and Rationales
- Evidence and Data