EMOTIONAL APPEALS IN PERSUASIVE WRITING

How writers and advertisers use your feelings to get you to agree with them.
Emotional Appeals in Persuasive Writing

Writers and advertisers use many techniques to convince you to agree with them or buy their product.

An emotional appeal tries to make the reader connect the writer’s message with an important feeling.
Types of Emotional Appeals

- Loaded Language
  - Basic Needs
  - Bandwagon
  - Testimonial
  - Snob Appeal
- Plain Folks Approach
  - Opinions as Facts
- Unsupported Generalities
The loaded language technique uses words that cause a strong feeling.

Once the reader is feeling strongly, he or she may be more likely to agree with the writer.
When a mother reads the word “groovy” in this ad for a popular kids’ lunch box food, what emotion do you think she will feel?

What could this feeling make her want to do?
Basic Needs

The basic needs technique tries to connect your need for

- Love
- Safety and security
- Convenience
- Health
- Money

to agreement with the writer’s opinion.
BASIC NEEDS

This example came from an ad for a low fat frozen dinner. What basic need does it appeal to?
The bandwagon technique appeals to the reader’s need to belong and to do what everyone is doing.

*Why the World Thinks Nivea Q10 Wrinkle Control is Better.*

It doesn’t irritate like AHAs and Retinols can. Instead, it uses the same anti-aging Q10 that’s already in your skin. No wonder it’s the world’s #1 anti-wrinkle creme.

Should you buy a product just because it is the most popular?
The testimonial technique uses a *famous* person or someone who looks like a *normal, average* person.

The testimonial tries to connect the writer’s opinion to the reader’s feeling about this person.
This man seems like a normal, likeable guy.

The text is written as if he is talking directly to the reader.

The picture also uses another emotional appeal. Can you identify it?
**SNOB APPEAL**

- Snob appeal is a technique that uses the reader’s desire to be better than others and connects this feeling to the writer’s opinion.

- “Better” can mean more beautiful, more athletic, smarter, or richer than the average person.
This model is Cybil Shepard, who is popular with older adults.

Advertisers use famous models to sell clothing because many people want to look as beautiful as the model.
PLAIN FOLKS APPROACH

- USING WORDS THAT APPEAL TO COMMON PEOPLE INSTEAD OF THE RICH OR PRIVILEGED.
OPINIONS AS FACTS

• USING THE PERSONAL OPINION OF THE SPEAKER OR WRITER AS A FACT.

• Example:

  • *Vita Vitamins is the best brand on the market.*
UNSUPPORTED GENERALITIES

- MAKING BOLD CLAIMS AND EMPTY PROMISES WITHOUT SUPPORTING THEM WITH FACTS.

- For example:
  - We are the best at what we do!
Conclusion

- Emotional appeal techniques can be extremely effective in persuading the reader to act on a feeling.
- As readers of persuasive writing, we must learn to recognize emotional appeals.
- If we focus on the facts instead of the feelings, we will make a better decision about the writer’s opinion.