

GLOSSARY

PART ONE: UNDERSTANDING PERSUASION

What Is Persuasion, Why Does it Matter, and How Does It Work?

persuasion (noun) /pər'sweɪʒən/ per-SWAY-zhun: The art of influencing someone's beliefs, decisions, and actions through communication, while respecting their freedom to choose.

- "Persuasion is the art of leading others to accept a viewpoint or take action through reasoned arguments, emotional appeals, and logical thinking."
- "Her persuasion skills helped her convince the school to start an after-school program."

manipulation (noun) /məˌnɪpjʊˈleɪʃən/ muh-NIP-yoo-LAY-shun: The intentional use of communication to control or influence someone through deceit, pressure, or unethical tactics, without their informed consent.

- "Manipulation seeks to control others without their informed consent or full understanding of the consequences."
- "The salesperson used manipulation by lying about the product's quality to make the sale."

rhetoric (noun) /ˈrɛtərɪk/ RET-uh-rik: The study and art of using language effectively and persuasively in speaking or writing.

Example from reading: "In ancient Greece, persuasion was considered an art form and an integral part of rhetoric—the art of speaking well." Use in a sentence: Politicians often study rhetoric to improve their public speaking skills.

logos (noun) /ˈloʊɡɒs/ LOH-gos: A persuasive appeal based on logic, reasoning, and evidence. One of Aristotle's three pillars of persuasion.

- "Logos means using logic and reason to persuade. It is crucial to support your argument with evidence, examples, and clear reasoning."
- "The scientist used logos by presenting research data to support her argument about climate change."

ethos (noun) /ˈiːθɒs/ EE-thos — Definition: A persuasive appeal based on the speaker's credibility, trustworthiness, and character. One of Aristotle's three pillars of persuasion.

- "Ethos means the speaker's credibility and trustworthiness. An audience is more likely to be persuaded by a speaker they perceive as trustworthy, ethical, and competent."
- "The doctor's ethos made patients trust her medical advice."

pathos (noun) /ˈpeɪθɒs/ PAY-thos: A persuasive appeal based on emotion and feelings. One of Aristotle's three pillars of persuasion.

- "Pathos means appealing to the audience's emotions. The speaker should appeal to the audience's emotions to create a connection and motivate a response."
- "The charity advertisement used pathos by showing images of children in need."

credibility (noun) /ˌkrɛdəˈbɪləti/ kred-uh-BIL-ih-tee: The quality of being trusted and believed because of your knowledge, experience, or honesty.

- "Your credibility, experience, and reliability are crucial to your persuasive capacity."
- "His credibility as a teacher increased after he won an award for educational excellence."

central processing (noun phrase) /ˈsɛntrəl ˈprɑːsɛsɪŋ/ SEN-trul PRAH-ses-ing: A way of evaluating persuasive messages by carefully thinking about the logic, evidence, and quality of the arguments. Part of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM).

- "If your audience is motivated and capable of processing the information you share, they will use central processing. The strength and quality of the argument play a central role."
- "When buying a car, she used central processing by comparing prices, safety ratings, and gas mileage before deciding."

peripheral processing (noun phrase) /pəˈrɪfərəl ˈprɑːsɛsɪŋ/ puh-RIF-er-ul PRAH-ses-ing: A way of evaluating persuasive messages by focusing on surface features like the speaker's appearance, attractiveness, or popularity rather than the content of the message. Part of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM).

- "When your audience lacks the motivation or capability to make an informed decision, they use peripheral processing. The credibility of the source and the use of social proof become significantly more important."
- "He bought the expensive sneakers using peripheral processing—he didn't research them, but they were worn by his favorite athlete."

resistance (noun) /rɪˈzɪstəns/ rih-ZIS-tuns: The act of opposing or refusing to accept something; in persuasion, when someone actively works against being convinced or influenced.

- "The complexity of persuasion involves adopting various strategies to reduce your audience's resistance."
- "She showed resistance to the salesperson's pitch because she didn't trust his motives."

skepticism (noun) /ˈskɛptɪsɪzəm/ SKEP-tih-siz-um: An attitude of doubt or questioning toward claims, especially when something seems too good to be true.

- "Some people might immediately recognize a sales pitch and react with skepticism."
- "His skepticism about the "free" vacation offer saved him from a scam."

motive (noun) /ˈmoʊtɪv/ MOH-tiv: The reason why someone does something; their purpose or intention behind an action.

- "People scrutinize the persuader's motives. They try to determine: Is this person's intent genuine and aligned with my interests?"
- "I questioned the salesperson's motives when they pressured me to buy immediately."

Vocabulary Practice

A. Match the term to the situation:

skepticism	pathos	logos
manipulation	ethos or credibility	

1. A doctor recommending a treatment based on 20 years of experience = _____
2. A commercial showing a sad puppy to encourage donations = _____
3. A scientist presenting data and statistics to support a theory = _____
4. Doubting a "limited time offer" that seems suspicious = _____
5. Being pressured to sign a contract you don't understand = _____

B. Fill in each blank with the correct term from the list below.

persuasion	central processing	credibility	motive
rhetoric	peripheral processing	resistance	

1. Maria studied ancient Greek _____ to improve her public speaking and learn how great orators structured their arguments.
2. When choosing a health insurance plan, David used _____ by carefully reading all the benefits, comparing costs, and analyzing coverage details before making his decision.
3. The salesperson's _____ for offering the "special discount" became clear when he said it was only available if she signed the contract immediately.
4. After being scammed once, Elena showed strong _____ to door-to-door salespeople and refused to listen to their pitches.
5. The professor's _____ increased when students learned she had published three books and won multiple teaching awards.
6. Ahmed bought the expensive watch using _____ because the celebrity in the advertisement made it look appealing, but he never researched the actual quality or features.
7. Effective _____ respects the other person's freedom to choose, while manipulation tries to force or trick them into agreement.