**Ethos (Character):**

“Character is almost, so to speak, the most authoritative form of persuasion” (Aristotle).

**Strategies to Establish Ethos:**

1. *Credibility*

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| **STRATEGY:** | **DEFINITION:** | **EXAMPLE:** |
| **Command the Facts:** | Make sure that know and can use “the relevant facts, events, and players (like other credible sources—just make sure your audience understands why they’re credible)” (Jackson 106). | “It may be that we’re convinced by established ethos (the decorations on a general’s uniform, a doctor’s lab coat, a distinguished title, the relative hotness of a defendant) because it saves us time and cognitive effort. In *Thinking, Fast and Slow,* Daniel Kahneman, a brilliant Princeton psychology professor and winner of the Nobel prize, explains that we often make errors of judgment because our minds work in two speeds: fast and slow” (Jackson 104). |
| **Kairotic Awareness:** | Make sure that “you have kairotic awareness of what makes your topic timely, interesting, of the moment” (Jackson 107). | Right after the violence of the Charlottesville protests, and after the president responded with a speech in which he did not speak out against the white nationalists, satirical news cast host John Oliver stated about the president: “He had one last shot before the buzzer on the racism clock hit zero, and he threw an air ball so far away, it landed in the third reich.” This was timely, as the events in question and the President’s reaction had just occurred. |
| **Lexical Field:** | Make sure that you “know the lingo (the key terms or concepts, the ‘lexical field’) of the discipline or subject you’re writing in, and you’re all about the details, the how-to, of academic writing” (Jackson 107). | **“**In the wake of the Red Scare, socialism, communism, and dictatorship were thought of as one and the same. This association, while understandable, is fundamentally inaccurate. Communism and dictatorship are *political* ideologies, while socialism is an *economic* one” (qtd. In Jackson 208). The author of the above example—Claire Gillett—obviously knew how to talk about socialism, communism, and dictatorship. |
| **Genre Conventions:** | Make sure that “you understand the conventions of the genre—in other words, you’re an insider, someone who knows what you’re supposed to do in all situations like these” (Jackson 107). | See any of the writing samples. |
| **Language Conventions:** | Make sure “you know how to use the English language really well, avoiding obvious errors that might slow down the reading experience and lead audiences to form unflattering judgments about you” (Jackson 107). | See any of the writing samples. |
| **Personal Experience:** | “When it’s appropriate to the genre you’re writing, use relevant personal experience to demonstrate that you’ve been there, done that.” This can boost your credibility, especially when you supplement your experience with significant research. (Jackson 107). | “In *My Age of Anxiety,* writer Scott Stossel introduces us to the history and science of anxiety and panic disorder through his own experience. ‘I struggle with emetophobia,’ he writes, which is ‘a pathological fear of vomiting, but it’s been a little while since I last vomited. More than a little while, actually: as I type this, it’s been, to be precise, thirty-five years, two months, four days, twenty-two hours, and forty-nine minutes’” (Jackson 107). |
| **Show Balance/Fairness:** | “Project a fair and balanced *ethos*. Aristotle tells us that ‘we believe fair-minded people to a greater extend and more quickly than we do others, on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt.’ . . . We trust people more when it looks like they’re not pushing their own agenda . . . You build credibility by showing that, though you have an argument to make, you’ve looked at the issue from multiple sides and weighed evidence for and against your proposal” (Jackson 108). | **“**In the wake of the Red Scare, socialism, communism, and dictatorship were thought of as one and the same. This association, while understandable, is fundamentally inaccurate. Communism and dictatorship are *political* ideologies, while socialism is an *economic* one” (qtd. In Jackson 208). The author of the above example—Claire Gillett—makes certain to state that counter-claims are “understandable.” Thus, while she refutes the counter-claims, she does so in a way that seems fair-minded. This builds credibility. |

1. *Relationship with Audience*

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| **STRATEGY:** | **DEFINITION:** | **EXAMPLE:** |
| **Be Kind:** | “One way to convince others is to be *kind* to them. Psychologist Jonathon Haidt argues that when it comes to reasoning, we’re like a rider on an elephant’s back—and the elephant is our intuitions, passions, and biases. ‘When discussions are hostile,’ he writes, ‘the odds of change are slight.’” (Jackson 109).  See **Show Balance/Fairness.** | Negative Example:  “Of course, in a country where free speech is guaranteed, any organization is free to advocate whatever position they desire, and the groups that put forth this letter are no exception. Is the attack on BYU narrow minded? Sure. Intellectually dishonest? Yeah. Wildly hypocritical? Of course it is. But that’s what BYU is growing accustomed to for sticking by religious rather than secular values” (Clark in “Opinion: LGTB’s Big Letter Contradicts Own Values”).  In this opinion piece from the *Universe,* the writer is a little too quick to attack the opposing side. While it’s admirable to defend one’s position and one’s school with gusto, coming off hostile can damage your ethos. |
| **Give Awesome Content:** | “Quality writing is a compliment to your reader. By writing a witty, smart, polished, well-argued paper, you’ve created a good experience for someone else. By sharing engaging links through social media, you give gifts; when you share lame-o stuff, you’ve wasted everyone’s time” (Jackson 109). | “I shot out of bed with all the elegance of a caffeinated baby hippo. With equal grace and restraint I scrambled into my overalls and flew out the door. It was finally morning, and I was here! On a *farm!*” (Jackson 266). This comes from an example of an issues paper about farm subsidizing. |
| **Connect with Your Audience:** | “As Robert Cialdini explains, the social science research is clear: ‘We like people who are similar to us.’ The rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke called this principle *identification.* You persuade someone, reasoned Burke, if you show you talk their language and identify your interests and purposes with theirs” (Jackson 110). | **“**Our interpretations are rooted in the narratives we construct about ourselves and the social world, and sometimes, like the pessimistic calculus student, we interpret things in unhealthy ways that have negative consequences. We could solve a lot of problems if we could get people to redirect their interpretations in healthier directions” (Timothy Wilson, qtd. In Jackson 110).  “Notice that Wilson uses the first-person plural to connect with the audience: *our* interpretations, the narratives *we* construct, *we* interpret things” (Jackson 110). |

1. *Other Virtues*

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| **STRATEGY:** | **DEFINITION:** | **EXAMPLE:** |
| **Be Funny:** | “We listen to people we admire, people who we think of as *good people:* funny people, courageous people, humble people, passionate people, just people, ethical people, self-reflective and self-sacrificing people, complimentary people, talented people, charitable people . . . Telling stories about yourself helps . . . Showing you have a sense of humor . . . We admire people who don’t take themselves too seriously, so long as their joking as appropriate to the situation and they don’t come off as being full of themselves” (Jackson 111-112). | “I shot out of bed with all the elegance of a caffeinated baby hippo. With equal grace and restraint I scrambled into my overalls and flew out the door. It was finally morning, and I was here! On a *farm!*” (Jackson 266). This is from a student example of an issues paper. |
| **Be Gracious/Humble:** | “We listen to people we admire, people who we think of as *good people:* funny people, courageous people, humble people, passionate people, just people, ethical people, self-reflective and self-sacrificing people, complimentary people, talented people, charitable people” (Jackson 111). See **Show Balance/Fairness.** | **“**In the wake of the Red Scare, socialism, communism, and dictatorship were thought of as one and the same. This association, while understandable, is fundamentally inaccurate. Communism and dictatorship are *political* ideologies, while socialism is an *economic* one” (qtd. In Jackson 208). The author of the above example—Claire Gillett—makes certain to state that counter-claims are “understandable.” Thus, while she refutes the counter-claims, she does so in a way that seems fair-minded. This builds credibility. |

**Character/Ethos Fallacies:**

**DO NOT DO THESE:**

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| **FALLACY:** | **DEFINITION:** | **EXAMPLE:** |
| **Ad Hominem:** | A personal attack against an opponent in order to distract from the issue. | Image result for examples of ad hominem |
| **Guilt by Association:** | Guilt ascribed to someone not because of any evidence but because of their association with an offender. | Image result for examples of guilt by association. |
| **Poisoning the Well:** | Using ad hominem early on in an argument to discredit one’s opponent before the argument can really even begin. | Image result for examples of poisoning the well fallacy |
| **False Authority:** | Using an authority as evidence in your argument when the authority is not really an authority on the facts relevant to the argument. | Image result for examples of false authority fallacy |