

So conditioned are we to believe that food should be almost free that even the rich, who pay a tinier fraction of their incomes for food than has ever been paid in human history, grumble at the price of an organic peach—a peach grown for flavor and picked, perfectly ripe, by a local farmer who is taking care of the land and paying his workers a fair wage. And yet, as the writer and farmer David Mas Masumoto recently pointed out, pound for pound, peaches that good still cost less than Twinkies. When we claim that eating well is an elitist preoccupation, we create a smokescreen that obscures the fundamental role our food decisions have in shaping the world. The reason that eating well in this country costs more than eating poorly is that we have a set of agricultural policies that subsidize fast food and make fresh, whole-some foods, which receive no government support, seem expensive. Organic foods seem elitist only because industrial food is artificially cheap, with its real costs being charged to the public purse, the public health, and the environment.

To develop a logical argument for better, healthier food for everyone, Waters refutes the counterargument that any food that is not “fast, cheap and easy” is “elitist.” She does that by redefining terms such as “cheap,” “[eating] well,” “expensive,” and “cost.” She explains in a step-by-step fashion the “smokescreen” of price that many people use to argue that mass-produced fast food is the best alternative for all but the very wealthy. She points out that “[o]rganic foods *seem* elitist only because industrial food is *artificially* cheap” (emphasis added). Waters asks her readers to think more deeply about the relationships among availability, production, and distribution of food: she appeals to reason.

### • ACTIVITY •

Following is an excerpt from an article by George Will, a columnist for the *Washington Post* and *Newsweek*, entitled “King Coal: Reigning in China.” Discuss how he appeals to logos in this article on “China’s ravenous appetite for coal.”

#### from *King Coal: Reigning in China*

GEORGE WILL

Half of the 6 billion tons of coal burned globally each year is burned in China. A spokesman for the Sierra Club, which in recent years has helped to block construction of 139 proposed coal-fired plants in America, says, “This is undermining everything we’ve accomplished.” America, say environmentalists, is exporting global warming.

Can something really be exported if it supposedly affects the entire planet? Never mind. America has partners in this crime against nature, if such it is. One Australian company proposes to build the Cowlitz facility; another has signed a \$60 billion contract to supply Chinese power plants with Australian coal.

The *Times* says ships—all burning hydrocarbons—hailed about 690 million tons of thermal coal this year, up from 385 million in 2001. China, which

imported about 150 million tons this year, was a net exporter of coal until 2009, sending abroad its low-grade coal and importing higher-grade, low-sulfur coal from, for example, the Powder River Basin of Wyoming and Montana. Because much of China’s enormous coal reserves is inland, far from coastal factories, it is sometimes more economical to import American and Australian coal.

Writing in the *Atlantic* on China’s appetite for coal and possible aptitude for using the old fuel in new, cleaner ways, James Fallows quotes a Chinese official saying that the country’s transportation system is the only serious limit on how fast power companies increase their use of coal. One reason China is building light-rail systems is to get passenger traffic out of the way of coal trains.

Fallows reports that 15 years from now China expects that 350 million people will be living in cities that do not exist yet. This will require adding to China’s electrical system a capacity almost as large as America’s current capacity. The United States, China, Russia and India have 40 percent of the world’s population and 60 percent of its coal.

### Pathos

Pathos is an appeal to emotions, values, desires, and hopes, on the one hand, or fears and prejudices, on the other. Although an argument that appeals exclusively to the emotions is by definition weak—it’s generally **propagandistic** in purpose and more **polemical** than persuasive—an effective speaker or writer understands the power of evoking an audience’s emotions by using such tools as figurative language, personal anecdotes, and vivid images.

Lou Gehrig uses the informal first person (*I*) quite naturally, which reinforces the friendly sense that this is a guy who is speaking on no one’s behalf but his own. He also chooses words with strong positive connotations: *grand, greatest, wonderful, honored, blessing*. He uses one image—*tower of strength*—that may not seem very original but strikes the right note. It is a well-known description that his audience understands—in fact, they probably have used it themselves. But, of course, the most striking appeal to pathos is the poignant contrast between Gehrig’s horrible diagnosis and his public display of courage.

Let’s look at a more direct example of pathos. As a vice-presidential candidate, Richard Nixon gave a speech in 1952 defending himself against allegations of inappropriate use of campaign funds. In it, he related this anecdote, which is the reason that the speech will forever be known as “the Checkers speech”:

#### from *The Checkers Speech*

RICHARD NIXON

One other thing I probably should tell you, because if I don’t they’ll probably be saying this about me, too. We did get something, a gift, after the election. A man down in Texas heard Pat [his wife] on the radio mention the fact that our two youngsters