**Apologia**

*From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia* and *About.com*

**Pronunciation:**AP-eh-LOW-je-eh **Also Known As:**speech of self-defense

*Apologia* is a form of practiced rhetoric used in [self-defense](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-defense) and as the vindication of a person, and of a course of action. The apologia is a persuasive [rhetorical device](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhetorical_device) common to [politics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics) and to [public relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_relations), and is an analytical term in [genre criticism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genre_criticism). An apologia entails the speaker publicly expressing [remorse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Remorse) for wrong-doing; likewise, the function of the [non-apology apology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-apology_apology) is that the speaker admits no wrong-doing. Forgiveness and re-acceptance are the ideal results of the public apology; [conflict resolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_resolution) by means of an explanation meant to mend a damaged relationship. The [etymology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etymology) of *apologia* ([Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language): ἀπολογία) derives from the root word *apologos* (ἀπόλογος), “a story”. The Greek philosophers [Plato](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plato), [Isocrates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isocrates), and [Aristotle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle) described *apologia* as a [genre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genre) of [rhetoric](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhetoric), in which the orator persuasively explains and defends his actions and himself against an accusation, and earns vindication from and re-acceptance to the polity.

**Apologia Postures**

* *Denial:* Simple denial or shifting the blame; directly or indirectly rejecting the substance, intent, or consequence of the questionable act
* *Bolstering*: attempting to enhance the image of the individual under attack
* *Differentiation*: distinguishing the questionable act from more serious or harmful actions
* *Transcendence*: placing the act in a different context
* *Evasion of responsibility:* Provocation, accident, and good intention
* *Reduction of offensiveness:* Bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attack accuser, and compensation
* *Corrective action:* Offering to repair damages caused by self-action and taking steps to prevent the event from reoccurring
* *Mortification:* Admitting wrongful behavior, asking for forgiveness, and apologizing

**Mass-Media Apologia Characteristics**

Lawrence Rosenfield examines *apologia* covered by [mass media](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mass_media) (specifically speeches by ex-President [Harry Truman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Truman) and vice presidential candidate [Richard Nixon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Nixon)) and describes four initial characteristics of mass-media *apologia.*

1. They tend to be short and sharp clashes

2. The remarks are not solely defensive messages

3. They include an extensive amount of data in the middle of the speech

4. Previously used arguments appear to be reused and combined into one cohesive message.

**Examples and Observations:**

"There may be several purposes for **apologia** rhetoric, including to explain the behavior or statement in a positive light, justify the behavior to minimize damage to image and character, or remove the topic from public discussion so that other issues may be discussed."
(Colleen E. Kelley, *The Rhetoric of First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton: Crisis Management Discourse*. Praeger, 2001)

**The Rhetoric of Damage Control**
"Some genres are so complex and 'high stakes' that they require a special kind of rhetorical maneuvering and critical assessment. One such animal is what Aristotle called an **apologia**--or what we label today as the rhetoric of self-defense, damage-control, image-repair, or crisis management. . . .Its indebtedness to all three genres [[deliberative](http://grammar.about.com/od/d/g/delibterm.htm), [judicial](http://grammar.about.com/od/il/g/judicialterm.htm), and [epideictic](http://grammar.about.com/od/e/g/epideicticterm.htm)], but its allegiance to none, makes the apologia a challenging rhetorical hybrid to create and critique” (Campbell & Huxman, 2003, pp. 293-294)

"The genre [of apologia] is a public purging of sins and a reaffirmation of the ethical norms of society 'dressed up' in theatrical proportions to bring pleasure to spectators; it is the most intimate form of secular discourse. Success in this arena requires a 'let it all hang out (remorse, pride, outrage)' approach. The visual media are especially equipped to provide the excess and exaggeration that this type of theater demands."
(Susan Schultz Huxman, "Exigencies, Explanations, and Executions: Toward a Dynamic Theory of the Crisis Communications Genre." *Responding to Crisis: A Rhetorical Approach to Crisis Communication*, ed. by Dan P. Millar and Robert L. Heath. Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004)